# S'ANKARA'S CLARIFICATION OF CERTAIN VEDANTIC CONCEPTS

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ADHYATMA PRAKASHA KARYALAYA,
HOLENARSIPUR

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# S'ANKARA'S CLARIFICATION OF CERTAIN VEDANTIC CONCEPTS

by
SWAMI SATCHIDANANDENDRA SARASWATI

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## PREFACE

The Contents of this little book constitute an adaptation of the Series of lectures in Kannada delivered by me at Mysore during the Thirty-ninth S'ankara Saptaham which lasted from 21-4-69 to 29-4-69 both days inclusive. The substance of these lectures has been published in the Kannada philosophical Monthly the "Adhyatma Prakasha".

I have rearranged and somewhat enlarged upon the original speeches in order to make this work self-complete as far as possible. I hope that this attempt will be of some assistance to the critical reader in appreciating S'ankara's interpretation of the Upanishads and their essential teaching. I am grateful to the authorities of the Adhyatma Prakasha Karyalaya for having undertaken to publish the work even in its imperfect form. My heart-felt Narayana Smaranams to all those that have contributed to make this publication a success.

Holenarsipur
25-9-1969

*S. SARASWATHI*

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Our sincere thanks to His Holiness for having allowed us to publish this valuable work also as his previous writings. We are grateful for the financial help rendered by Sri Y. S. Hiriyanniah, Govt. Contractor, Bangalore in bringing out this work.

Holenarsipur
25-9-1969

Y. NARASAPPA,
*Chairman, A. P. Karyalaya.*

# INTRODUCTION

## THE TWO SETS OF UPANISHADIC TEACHING

The Upanishads contain two sets of teaching regarding Brahman or Reality, addressed to two different levels of the mind. To the highest grade of the aspirants, belongs the disciple who has attained the mental equipment necessary for entering upon the course of study, either in this birth or possesses an introvert mind as a result of discipline undergone in his last lives, qualifying him to grasp the teaching imparted in the Śruti.

This class of seekers comprises two grades. The first needs only reminding of the true nature of one's Self by the Śruti through an experienced adept who has himself experienced the truths of Vedanta, while the second requires guidance for the contemplation of the spiritual steps through which one has ultimately to reach that same Self. It is to this class of both the grades that the present booklet is expected to be of some assistance in the study of Vedanta.

The other set of Upanishadic teachings according to Śaṅkara, consists of injunctions for

PACIFIC SCHOOL OF RELIGION

the meditation of the so-called Apara (lower) Brahman. This meditation is a mystical discipline, quite different from the practice of contemplation or the Adhyātma-Yōga (referred to in the present work on page 101), which leads the seeker to the direct realization of Brahman in this very life. Like the meditation taught in the non-Hindu religions, Upanishadic Meditation of Brahman also assures eschatological benefits in the Highest Heaven, here called the Brahma-lōka. A separate treatise would be necessary for the guidance of the students of this class, whose practice of meditation is to be mainly founded on faith and hope. It may be remarked, in passing, that Upanishadic mysticism is perfectly rational in that it rests on the secure foundation of the proven results that can be experienced in this very life, by disciples of the first class mentioned above.*

## THE CORRECT VEDANTIC TRADITION

Of the teachers whose Vedantic works have survived up to our times, three famous repozi-

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* For the benefit of the students who are tolerably well-acquainted with Sanskrit, a small book called the '*Brahmavidyārahasyavivṛti*' has been published in the Karyalaya. It contains instructions in meditation of the *Apara-Brahman* as well as the method of realizing the *Para-Brahman*.

tories of this genuine tradition deserve mention here. It was Sri Gauḍapādāchārya and subsequently Sri S'aṅkarāchārya and Sures'varāchārya, that clearly pointed to the true line of demarkation between the two sets of Upanishadic teachings to which we have here drawn the students' attention. Before and after the time of those stalwart champions, we find that Upanishadic teachings have been uniformly treated by all interpreters as leading to some one of the systems which are mostly a conglomeration of the logical and mystical doctrines with a sprinkling of the Sāṅkhya or the Yōga system or both. In controversial works on Vedanta brought out in recent times we find an inclination to succumb to the temptation of using the phraseology of Neo-logic also.

Sri S'aṅkara was perhaps the first Vedantin to lay emphasis on the traditional method of *Adhyāropa-Apavāda* and to disentangle the Upanishad texts purporting to reveal the true nature of Brahman as the non-dual Self of all the phenomenal world from the texts which have the sole purpose of enjoining meditation. He was also the first to extricate the Upanishadic teaching from the exclusively theological trends to which they were drifting in the hands of the ancient Advaitins.

His clarification of certain Vedantic concepts and principles of interpretation to be applied to the Upanishadic teaching as contrasted with that of the Karma-kānda (portion of the Vedas treating religious works) has greatly helped us to see how the Upanishads are not mere authoritative mystical utterances to be implicitly believed in, but contain certain revelations which take us to direct intuition here and now of undeniable verities with regard to our Real Self.

It is with the object of drawing the attention of the critical student of Śaṅkara's Vedanta to the genuine aspect of Vedantic reasoning based upon intuition, that I have been making a sustained attempt by writing a number of books in Sanskrit and English as well as in Kannada. The following pages contain a systematic account of the clarification of certain Vedantic concepts as presented in Śaṅkara's classical writings, especially in his Sūtra-Bhāshya. It is an adaptation of the substance of the Kannada lectures delivered by me during the Śaṅkara-Saptāham Celebrations at Mysore in April this year. I shall feel amply repaid for the trouble taken in its preparation if it adds in any way to a better understanding of the matter and method of Śaṅkara's Vedanta on the part of earnest seekers of truth.

My heart-felt Narayana Smaranams to Swami Brahmanandendra Saraswati and Sri N. S. Ranga Swamy, who went through the manuscript and offered suggestions for the improvement of the work.

My Narayana Smaranams also to the authorities of the Adhyatma Prakasha Karyalaya, who have undertaken the publication of the booklet as they have done with regard to my other writings. May Bhagavan Narayana be pleased with this humble offering of my endeavour to present Śaṅkara's view of Vedanta, as I understand it.

Holenarsipur.
25-9-1969

SRI SATCHIDANANDENDRA SARASWATI

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# S'ANKARA'S CLARIFICATION OF CERTAIN VEDANTIC CONCEPTS

## 1. THE ATMAN

1. One of the great obstacles in the way of those who try to understand the real teaching of the Upanishads, seems to be the want of sufficient effort to determine the exact significance of certain fundamental concepts common to all of them. An attempt will be made in the following pages to discuss some of the most important of such concepts, in the light of S'aṅkara's Bhāshya, the most ancient one available on the Bādarāyaṇa's Sūtras.

The concept that deserves our foremost attention is obviously that of the Atman. S'aṅkara introduces his Bhāshya with the declaration that all the Upanishads purport to teach the knowledge of the Unity of Atman *(Atmaikatva-vidyā-pratipattaye)*.

2. And this is in harmony with the teaching of the Upanishads themselves. *The Māṇḍūkya Upanishad*, for instance, says that Atman is Brahman (अयमात्मा ब्रह्म) and says that Brahman which is unobjectifiable has to be "realized solely by means of the concept of Atman (एकात्मप्रत्यय-सारम् Ma. 7)", and *the Mundaka* declares that Brahman which is the Light of lights, only the knowers of Atman can know (तच्छुभ्रं ज्योतिषां ज्योतिस्तद्यदात्मविदो विदुः, Mu. 2-2-10). The Bhāshya on that Upanishad explains the passage thus: "Only those that follow the trail of the concept of Atman, can know it and not those that pursue the concepts of external objects, for it is the brightest light within (ते आत्मविदस्तद्विदुः आत्मप्रत्ययानुसारिणः। यस्मात् परं ज्योतिः, तस्मात् त एव तद्विदुः, नेतरे बाह्यार्थप्रत्ययानुसारिणः. Mu. 2-2-10)." Again *the Bṛhadāraṇyaka* says:

स योऽत एकैकमुपास्ते न स वेदाहृत्स्नो ह्येषोऽत एकैकेन भवत्यात्मेत्येवोपासीतात्र ह्येते सर्व एकं भवन्ति ॥

"So whosoever devotes himself to any one of these concepts, he knows not the truth; for he becomes only partial by being tied to these ideas severally. One should therefore regard oneself as the Atman alone, for herein are comprehended all these ideas." Br. 1-4-7.

This *Śruti* says that to regard oneself as the living soul, as a speaker, seer, hearer, or thinker,

is to conceive oneself but partially ; for these are notions drawn exclusively from the functions of the soul. But the most comprehensive way of regarding oneself is to think of oneself as the Atman, for in the Atman all the other aspects are comprehended.

In the *Chāndogya* again, we find the following text :

स य एषोऽणिमैतदात्म्यमिदं सर्वं तत्सत्यं स आत्मा तत्त्वमसि श्वेतकेतो ॥

" As for this subtle principle, all this Universe has it for its essence. That is Reality, that is the Atman, that thou art, O S'vetaketu." Ch. 6-14-3.

It is obvious that the word 'Atman' here refers to the Reality underlying all the phenomenal world, and that each individual soul is identical with it.

3. The word Atman is used in Sanskrit as a reflexive or emphatic pronoun also like words compounded with self in English. It then denotes the individual or individuals denoted by the antecedent noun or pronoun. For example, in अहम् आत्मनो गृहं गच्छामि ( I am going to my house ), वयम् आत्मनो गृहं गच्छामः (we go each to his house), देवदत्त आत्मनो गृहं गतः (Devadatta went to his house), त्वम् आत्मनो गृहं गच्छसि (you are going to your house) etc., the word आत्मनः means my own, our own, his

own, and your own. But as used in the above-cited texts, it is clear that the word is no pronoun but denotes the essential real nature of the whole world of animate and inanimate beings.

4. Basing himself on a passage in the Bṛhadāraṇyaka (3-9-26) Śaṅkara calls this Atman *the Upanishadic person* (औपनिषदः पुरुषः) and says,

(१) " योऽसौ उपनिषत्स्वेवाधिगतः पुरुषोऽसंसारी, ब्रह्म, .... नासौ नास्ति नाधिगम्यत इति वा शक्यं वदितुम्, 'स एष नेति-नेत्यात्मा' (बृ. ३-९-२६) इत्यात्मशब्दात्, आत्मनश्च प्रत्याख्यातुमशक्यत्वात्, य एव निराकर्ता तस्यैवाऽऽत्मत्वात ॥ "

" Now this *Purusha*, who is known only from the Upanishads, and who is not a transmigratory soul but Brahman itself, it is not possible to assert that this Purusha does not exist, or that he cannot be known. For in the passage 'Now this is the Atman, described as not this, not this' (Br. 3-9-26) this Purusha is referred to by the word Atman (the Self), and it is impossible to deny one's own Self, because the very denier is himself the Atman. "

SBh. 1-1-4, p. 20.

Here Śaṅkara says in so many words, that the Atman is the real Self of each one of us, whether one believes, doubts or denies the existence of this Atman.

Now, lest it should be supposed that this Upanishadic Atman is identical with the individual ego of living beings, Śaṅkara brings forward

an objection and provides a rejoinder clarifying the Upanishadic concept of Atman :—

(२) "ननु आत्मा अहंप्रत्ययविषयत्वात्, उपनिषत्स्वेव विज्ञायते इत्यनुपपन्नम् । न । तत्साक्षित्वेन प्रत्युक्तत्वात् । न ह्यहंप्रत्ययविषयकर्तृव्यतिरेकेण तत्साक्षी सर्वभूतस्थः, समः, एकः, कूटस्थनित्यः, पुरुषो विधिकाण्डे, तर्कसमये वा केनचिदधिगतः, सर्वस्याऽऽत्मा ॥"

"*Objection* :— Atman being the object of the notion 'I', it is not reasonable to say that he is known only from the Upanishads.

*Reply* :— Not so. For we have refuted this position by saying that this Atman is the witness of that ego. (To explain) :—Other than the agent who is the object of the notion 'I', there is the Witness thereof residing in all beings, the same in all, the one unchanging eternal Purusha, the self of each and every one, who is never known to any one from the *Vidhikānda* (Vedic portion enjoining religious works), or from the speculative schools."

SBh. 1-1-4, p. 20.

This is a bold claim that the Atman as the Witnessing Consciousness, as distinct from the individual soul is the real self of each and every creature, and is identical with Brahman or Divinity itself. This Witnessing Atman, it is claimed, is to be known and can be known only from the Upanishads and that there is no inkling of this concept in any theological writing or speculative system. While Śaṅkara was referring only to the

Karmakānda of the Vedas and to the Darśanas prevalent during his times, it is strange and nevertheless undeniably true of the entire body of theological or speculative systems in the whole world to this day. This self-evident concept of Atman as the eternal unchanging Witnessing Principle in each one of us, is known only through the Upanishads and can never be traced to any other source. And Śaṅkara, is the only thinker who has clarified this Vedantic concept. With an unsurpassed and unsurpassable spiritual intuition he found that the Upanishadic pronouncement was convincing and contained the only final soul-saving Truth.

(३) एको देवः सर्वभूतेषु गूढः सर्वव्यापी सर्वभूतान्तरात्मा ।
सर्वाध्यक्षः सर्वभूताधिवासः साक्षी चेता केवलो निर्गुणश्च ॥

"The one Deva (God) is hidden in all beings. All-pervading, the one inmost Self of all creatures, presiding over all, the Witnessing Consciousness residing in all creatures, One without a second and having no qualifying adjuncts."

Sve. 6-10.

## 2. VIDYA AND AVIDYA

5. *The word* '*Atman*' really means that which pervades (आप्नोति) all. And we have seen that our genuine Atman is the only Reality underlying all the phenomenal Universe, according to the Upanishads. Indeed the *Chāndogya* declares :—

अथात आत्मादेश एवात्मैवाधस्तादात्मोपरिष्टादात्मा पश्चादात्मा पुरस्तादात्मा दक्षिणत आत्मोत्तरत आत्मैवेदं सर्वमिति ॥

"Now, therefore, the teaching concerning Atman alone is begun. Atman alone is below, Atman above, Atman behind, Atman in front, Atman on the right, Atman on the left. All this is Atman alone." Ch. 7-25-2.

How then is it, it will be asked, that we see this manifold universe in which live so many individual beings ? How is it that I, you, or anybody else in this world, firmly believes that each one of us is a limited being full of desires and not this great Atman ?

6. The Upanishads reply : It is because of *Avidyā* or ignorance. When *Nachiketas* asked Yama, the God of death, to reveal the nature of Atman to him, the latter replied :

(१) दूरमेते विपरीते विषूची अविद्या या च विद्येति ज्ञाता ।
विद्याभीप्सिनं नचिकेतसं मन्ये न त्वा कामा बहवोऽलोलुपन्त ॥

अविद्यायामन्तरे वर्तमानाः स्वयं धीराः पण्डितंमन्यमानाः ।
दन्द्रम्यमाणाः परियन्ति मूढा अन्धेनैव नीयमाना यथान्धाः ॥

" These two are wide apart, running in opposite directions, Avidyā and that which is known as Vidya. I consider thee Nachiketas, as longing for Vidya, for the numerous desires have not weaned you away from the right path. Resting in the midst of ignorance, but considering themselves discriminative and wise, deluded persons go round and round through crooked ways like blind men led by one who is himself blind. " Ka. 2-4, 5.

How and when is this darkness or nescience to be dispersed ? The Upanishad replies :—

(२) पुरुष एवेदं विश्वं कर्म तपो ब्रह्म परामृतम् ।
एतद्यो वेद निहितं गुहायां सोऽविद्याग्रन्थिं विकिरतीह सोम्य ॥

"All this *karma* and *tapas* is Purusha, the highest immortal Brahman alone. Whosoever knows this as hidden in the cave of the heart, cuts the knot of ignorance, my dear boy. " Mu. 2-1-10.

7. Now what exactly does this ' *Concept of ignorance* ' stand for ? Since it is the ignorance concerning Brahman or the real Atman, the Self of us all, it cannot be obviously, a function of the mind, which consists in not knowing or misconceiving an object. The Atman is as we have already seen (p. 5), the Witnessing Consciousness in each of us, and there is nothing of which it is

not the witness. So it can never be the object of the intellect, which is itself one of the objects of that consciousness. But nevertheless, we have no other instrument of knowledge, associated with which we can talk of ourselves as ignorant of, or knowing anything. What then can the Upanishads possibly mean, when they speak of the ignorance of Atman ?

8. This question of the nature of the concept of Avidyā was never raised by the ancient Advaitins, nor has it received the close attention it deserves, at the hands of the Post-Śāṅkaras. The author of the *Pañcapādikā* regarded it as a postulate of Vedanta, for he says :

> अवश्यमेषा अविद्याशक्तिः, बाह्याध्यात्मिकेषु वस्तुषु तत्स्वरूप-सत्तामात्रानुबन्धिनी अभ्युपगन्तव्या । अन्यथा मिथ्यार्थावभासानुपपत्तेः ॥
>
> " This power called Avidya must needs be assumed, as clinging to the very nature of all internal and external things ; for otherwise, false appearances can never be accounted for. "
>
> P.P., p. 41.

But it is evident that this power is not really a logical necessity, since none of the other thinkers have recognized it and yet their systems have not suffered in any manner just because they dispensed with the postulate.

Śaṅkara's explanation of this enigmatical concept is as follows :

(१) अस्मत्प्रत्ययगोचरे विषयिणि चिदात्मके युष्मत्प्रत्ययगोचरस्य विषयस्य तद्धर्माणां चाध्यासः, तद्विपर्ययेण विषयिणस्तद्धर्माणां च विषयेऽध्यासो मिथ्या इति भवितुं युक्तम् । तथापि अन्योन्यस्मिन् अन्योन्यात्मकताम् अन्योन्यधर्मांश्च अध्यस्य इतरेतरविवेकेन, अत्यन्तविविक्तयोर्धर्मधर्मिणोर्मिथ्याज्ञाननिमित्तः सत्यानृते मिथुनीकृत्य 'अहमिदम्', 'ममेदम्'-इति नैसर्गिकोऽयं लोकव्यवहारः ॥

(२) तमेतमेवंलक्षणम् अध्यासं पण्डिता अविद्येति मन्यन्ते ; तद्विवेकेन च वस्तुस्वरूपावधारणं विद्यामाहुः ॥

The sum and substance of these two extracts, from the famous Introduction to Śaṅkara's Sūtra Bhāshya is this :— Atman, the real I of each one of us, is the Witnessing Consciousness. That alone is really real according to Vedanta, since it is absolutely undeniable as we have seen (p. 4). The non-self which is made up of the body, the senses and the mind is an unreal appearance, set up by ignorance or privation of knowledge. Now the human intellect has an innate tendency to project the non-real Not-self (Un-Atman) and confound the identity of the real and the unreal whenever it functions. This mixing up of the real and the unreal and the delusion which prompts the mind to submit itself to a mistaken transference of the mutual properties of the self and the non-self, is what is called *Avidyā*. This tendency is so

natural to all mankind that no one suspects that he is under the influence of this primary ignorance due to want of discrimination (अविवेकादध्यस्य) when he talks of 'me and mine'. It follows that this Avidyā or ignorance is finally wiped off as soon as one discriminates the real and the unreal and determines their true nature. This discrimination and determination of the true nature of these, is what is termed *Vidyā*, knowledge.

9. *How and when* was this mutual superimposition of identity and mistaken transference of properties caused? This question is obviously illegitimate, for we have learnt that it is an innate tendency of the human mind to confound the real and the unreal. All human action and experience of the fruits of action presuppose intellection and intellection itself is based on this natal error. Human behaviour is on a par with animal behaviour in this respect for both are the result of this natural want of discrimination. Śaṅkara's dicta on this point are incontrovertible for they are all based upon universal intuition.

(१) तत्रेतमविद्याख्यम् आत्मानात्मनोरितरेतराध्यासं पुरस्कृत्य सर्वे प्रमाणप्रमेयव्यवहारा लौकिका वैदिकाश्च प्रवृत्ताः, सर्वाणि च शास्त्राणि विधिप्रतिषेधमोक्षपराणि ॥

"It is on the presupposition of this mutual superimposition of the self and the not-self, called

Avidyā that all conventions of the means and objects of right knowledge – whether secular or sacred–proceed, as also all the Śāstras dealing with injunction and prohibition or final release. ''

Introduction to SBh., p. 2.

(२) यथा हि पश्वादयः शब्दादिभिः श्रोत्रादीनां संबन्धे सति शब्दादिविज्ञाने प्रतिकूले जाते ततो निवर्तन्ते, अनुकूले च प्रवर्तन्ते–यथा दण्डोद्यतकरं पुरुषमभिमुखमुपलभ्य मां हन्तुमयमिच्छतीति पलायितुमारभन्ते, हरिततृणपूर्णपाणिमुपलभ्य तं प्रत्यभिमुखीभवन्ति – एवं पुरुषा अपि व्युत्पन्नचित्ताः क्रूरदृष्टीन् आक्रोशतः खड्गोद्यतकरान् बलवत उपलभ्य ततो निवर्तन्ते तद्विपरीतान् प्रति प्रवर्तन्ते, अतः समानः पश्वादिभिः पुरुषाणां प्रमाणप्रमेयव्यवहारः । पश्वादीनां च प्रसिद्धोऽविवेकपुरःसरः प्रत्यक्षादिव्यवहारः । तत्सामान्यदर्शनात्, व्युत्पत्तिमतामपि पुरुषाणाम् प्रत्यक्षादिव्यवहारस्तत्कालः समान इति निश्चीयते ॥

'' And because there is no difference between the (lower animals) like beasts and man. (To explain :-) Beasts and other animals run away from any sound etc. that contact their ear and other organs of sense whenever the knowledge is unfavourable, but proceed towards them whenever the knowledge is pleasant. As for instance, when they see a man approaching them with a raised hand with a club, they begin to run away from him fearing that he intends to beat them, but when they see one with a tuft of green grass in his hands they proceed towards him. So also, even men with intellect developed, turn away when they see strong fierce-looking persons shouting with upraised swords in hand, but come forward

towards those who are opposite to this in nature. It is well-known that knowledge through perception of the lower animals presupposes non-discrimination. Since the behaviour of even intelligent persons is seen to be similar to that of animals, their perception etc. also at the time can be concluded to be similar.

[The meaning is that while men do have the faculty of re-thinking about their behaviour, the process of behaviour itself is the result of superimposition due to want of discrimination. This shows that all human activity based upon perception and other means of knowledge, is in the field of an innate error due to want of discrimination between the real and the unreal.]

(३) एवमयमनादिरनन्तो नैसर्गिकोऽध्यासो मिथ्याप्रत्ययरूपः कर्तृत्वभोक्तृत्वप्रवर्तकः सर्वलोकप्रत्यक्षः । अस्य अनर्थहेतोः प्रहाणाय आत्मैकत्वविद्याप्रतिपत्तये सर्वे वेदान्ता आरभ्यन्ते ॥

"Thus, this beginningless and endless innate superimposition of the nature of a false notion engenders agency and experience of the fruits of action that all humanity is familiar with. In order to destroy this source of all evil, all the Upanishads are begun to propound the *Vidyā* of the oneness of Atman."

Introduction to SBh., p. 4.

10. The clarification of the concept of Avidyā then, is a special contribution of Śaṅkara to Vedanta. Nowhere else, in the whole range of

Vedantic literature do we find that the precision of thought which distinguishes this root-Avidyā, which is responsible for the whole process of human knowledge and activity, from the individual instances of the ignorance of objects in ordinary life. This Avidyā is beginningless not because, as has been egregriously ill-conceived by some followers of Śaṅkara, there is a beginningless series of individual Avidyā flowing in a continuous stream, but because it is itself the conjurer of time in which any series can be conceived to exist. Avidyā is no actual concept of Atman, because Atman can never be perceived or conceived by the mind, the mind itself being a superimposition on the Self. So it is a notion having the semblance of a false concept (मिथ्याप्रत्ययरूपः). And Vidyā, in its turn, is not knowledge of Atman in the ordinary sense, for the simple reason that Atman can never be an object of knowledge. It is rather the intuition of Atman by Atman himself. We shall have occasion to discuss the nature of this Vedantic knowledge later on.

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## 3. CREATION, MAYA AND CAUSATION

11. The concepts of *Creation* and *Māyā* demand clarification to justify the monistic systems of Vedanta. Māyā is of especial importance for Śaṅkara's system, because much ink has been spilt on the question as to whether or not *the doctrine of Māyā in Vedanta*, is a borrowing from Buddhism.

The following are some of the Upanishadic texts referring to creation :

(१) स प्राणमसृजत प्राणाच्छ्रद्धां खं वायुर्ज्योतिरापः पृथिवीन्द्रियं मनः । अन्नमन्नाद्वीर्यं तपो मन्त्राः कर्म लोका लोकेषु च नाम च ॥

" He created life, from life faith, ether, air, light, water, earth, senses, mind and food. From food vigour, *tapas*, *mantras*, religious works, the worlds, and in the worlds, name." Pr. 6-4.

(२) आत्मा वा इदमेक एवाग्र आसीन्नान्यत्किञ्चन मिषत् । स ईक्षत लोकान्नु सृजा इति । स इमाल्लोकानसृजत । अम्भो मरीचीर्मरमापः ॥

" This was indeed Atman alone in the beginning and nothing else, sentient or non-sentient. He thought,' Let me create the worlds'. He created these worlds :- *Ambhas* (the upper aquatic regions), *Mareechies*, *Mara*, *and Apah* (the Nether aquatic regions.)" Ai. 1-1, 2.

[The first text simply says that the Purusha created Prāṇa (life) etc. It is not clear out of what substance he created them. The second expressly says that all this universe was Atman before creation. The passages quoted below declare that Atman (or Brahman) himself became all this in the process of creation.]

(३) यथोर्णनाभिः सृजते गृह्णते च यथा पृथिव्यामोषधयः संभवन्ति ।
यथा सतः पुरुषात्केशलोमानि तथाक्षरात् संभवतीह विश्वम् ॥

"Just as the spider exudes and withdraws (the thread), just as plants are born out of the earth and just as the hairs (on the head and all over the body come) out of a living person, so comes out all this universe from the Imperishable One." Mu. 1-1-7.

[The word *sṛj* (सृज् literally means to throw out), creation in the sense of giving rise to something out of nothing is unknown to the Upanishads. Akshara without attributes, is itself the stuff of the universe.]

(४) सदेव सोम्येदमग्र आसीदेकमेवाद्वितीयम् । तद्धैक आहुरसदेवेदमग्र आसीदेकमेवाद्वितीयं तस्मादसतः सज्जायत ॥ १ ॥ कुतस्तु खलु सोम्यैवं स्यादिति होवाच कथमसतः सज्जायेतेति । सत्त्वेव सोम्येदमग्र आसीदेकमेवाद्वितीयम् ॥ २ ॥ तदैक्षत बहु स्यां प्रजायेयेति तत्तेजोऽसृजत ॥ ३ ॥

"This was Being alone in the beginning, my boy, One without a second. Here some say that this was non-being alone in the beginning, and out of that non-being, being was born. How could it

be so, my boy? How could being be possibly born from non-being? Being alone, this was in the beginning, One without a second. It thought 'Let me become plenteous, let me be born as manifold'. It created light." Ch. 6-1-1, 2, 3.

The passages cited above might, by implication mean that Primeval Being or Atman actually modified and transformed itself into the Universe. But this sort of Self-transformation is repugnant to the Upanishads. For a subsequent text in this self-same *Chāndogya* Upanishad says :

(५) स य एषोऽणिमैतदात्म्यमिदं सर्वं तत्सत्यं स आत्मा तत्त्वमसि श्वेतकेतो इति ॥

"Now for this Subtle Being : All this Universe has it alone as its essence, that alone is real, that is the Atman, that thou art, O Śvetaketu!"
Ch. 6-8-7.

[ It is here declared that the Pure Being alone which created the Universe is strictly real, and that alone is the genuine Atman. By implication, the Universe is comparatively unreal, and the individual selves are not the genuine Atman. ]

Here is another passage which declares that the Paramatman alone is really real :—

(५) सोऽकामयत । बहु स्यां प्रजायेयेति । स तपोऽतप्यत । स तपस्तप्त्वा । इदं सर्वमसृजत । यदिदं किं च । तत्सृष्ट्वा । तदेवानु प्राविशत् । तदनुप्रविश्य । सच्च त्यच्चाभवत् । निरुक्तं चानिरुक्तं च । निलयनं चानिलयनं च । विज्ञानं चाविज्ञानं च । सत्यं चानृतं च सत्यमभवत् । यदिदं किञ्च । तत्सत्यमित्याचक्षते ॥

" He wished ' may I become plenteous, may I be born as the manifold '. He thought it over ; having thought it over, He created all this, whatsoever we find here. Having created it, He entered the very same (creation). And having entered it He became this (actual) and that, the definable and the undefinable, the substrate and the non-substrate, the sentient and the non-sentient. The Real became both the real and the unreal, whatever there is here. They call it Reality. " Tai. 2-6.

[ The really real Paramatman has entered into the created Universe and appears as all the differentiated things, and the individual selves. The distinction of the real and the unreal, is also unreal from the standpoint of the really real. More of this distinction of views anon.]

12. And now for the concept of *Māyā* in the Upanishads :

छन्दांसि यज्ञाः क्रतवो व्रतानि भूतं भव्यं यच्च वेदा वदन्ति ।
अस्मान्मायी सृजते विश्वमेतत्तस्मिंश्चान्यो मायया संनिरुद्धः ॥
मायां तु प्रकृतिं विद्यान्मायिनं तु महेश्वरम् ।
तस्यावयवभूतैस्तु व्याप्तं सर्वमिदं जगत् ॥

" The various Chandas (metres), Yagnas and *Kratus* (sacrifices with and without the *Yūpa*-post), austerities (like the Cāndrāyaṇa), and the existent entities as well as results to be achieved, which the Vedas reveal – all these are born of this (Great Being), The Mayin (magician) creates all this Universe, and in it is another bound by Māya. Prakriti is to be known as the Māyā, the Great

Lord as the Mayin (magician). All this world of moving and non-moving beings is pervaded by (individual souls) which are his parts."

Sve. 4–9, 10.

Here appears the word 'Māyā' which has scared many a scholar. Bhāskarāchārya, Yāmunachārya and others, took advantage of the employment of this word and argued that Advaitins who employ the Māyā-doctrine are crypto-Buddhists and some oriental scholars have openly charged Gauḍapāda with having borrowed the doctrine from the Buddhists, while some of them have gone to the length of concluding that the S'vetas'vatara, must be a later Upanishad just because it contains this bugbear of the word Māyā. And yet, what is there in this inocuous epithet of Māyin as applied to Isvara and Māyā, as the material out of which he creates the world ? No section of the Buddhists ever postulated an Īs'vara or invested him with Māyā whether as a power or anything else. And when we closely examine S'aṅkara's Bhāshya, we find that there is nothing to be afraid or ashamed of when we entertain this highly philosophical doctrine which so satisfactorily explains the phenomena of life while keeping the Advaitic Absolute perfectly intact.

13. First of all, we should dismiss the idea of the Post-S'aṅkaras who have stumbled into the

mistake of identifying *Māyā* with *Avidyā*, misled by the collocation of those two words in stray passages of Śaṅkara's Bhāshya, such as the following :-

एक एव परमेश्वरः कूटस्थनित्यो विज्ञानधातुः अविद्यया मायया मायाविवत् अनेकधा विभाव्यते, नान्यो विज्ञानधातुरस्ति ॥

SBh. 1-3-19, p. 115.

This passage simply means that there is only one principle essentially of the nature of changeless consciousness, and that is Brahman or the Supreme Lord, and that he is regarded to be many through Avidya, just as a magician on account of his Māyā, is looked upon to be many, while there is really no sentient entity other than Brahman or the Lord. It has nothing to do with the identity or difference of the Vedantic concepts of Avidyā and Māyā.

14. And in the second place, some thinkers misled by the word '*Śakti*' occuring in Śaṅkara's Bhāshya as well as in the Śrutis, think that Māyā is a power exercised by God to delude souls. The following excerpts not only dispel any doubt as to what Śaṅkara exactly means by this word, but also lay down a clear-cut principle which enables us to distinguish the concept of *Māyā* from *Avidyā*.

(१) परमेश्वराधीना त्रियमरूपाभिः प्रागवस्था जगतोऽभ्युपगम्यते न स्वतन्त्रा । सा चावश्याभ्युपगन्तव्या । अर्थवती हि सा । न हि तया विना परमेश्वरस्य स्रष्टृत्वं सिध्यति । शक्तिरहितस्य तस्य प्रवृत्त्यनुपपत्तेः । मुक्तानां च पुनरुत्पत्तिः । कुतः ? विद्यया तस्या बीजशक्तेर्दाहात् । अविद्यात्मिका हि बीजशक्तिः अव्यक्तशब्दनिर्देश्या परमेश्वराश्रया मायामयी महासुप्तिः, यस्यां स्वरूपप्रतिबोधरहिताः शेरते संसारिणो जीवाः । तदेतदव्यक्तं क्वचित् आकाशशब्दनिर्दिष्टम् ; 'एतस्मिन्नु खल्वक्षरे गार्ग्याकाश ओतश्च प्रोतश्च' (बृ. ३-८-११) इति श्रुतेः । क्वचिदक्षरशब्दोदितम् ; 'अक्षरात्परतः परः' (मु. २-१-२) इति श्रुतेः । क्वचिन्माया इति सूचितम् ; 'मायां तु प्रकृतिं विद्यान्मायिनं तु महेश्वरम्' (श्वे. ४-१०) इति मन्त्रवर्णात् । अव्यक्ता हि सा माया तत्त्वान्यत्वनिरूपणस्य अशक्यत्वात् ॥

"What is admitted by us is, however, only a previous state of the world dependent on the Supreme Lord, not independent of Him. And it has to be necessarily admitted, for it serves a purpose. To explain : Without it, the Supreme Lord cannot be a creator, since without this potentiality, He cannot be active. And on this supposition only, the released souls cannot be reborn, for in this case the causal potentiality is burnt up by Vidyā. The causal potentiality called *Avyakta* (or the Unmanifest), having its locus in the Supreme Lord is the illusory universal sleep,in which all the transmigratory souls are sleeping deprived of the knowledge of their true nature. Now this *Avyakta* is sometimes denoted by the word *Ākāśa* (ether), as for instance in the Śruti 'It is in that Imperishable indeed, O Gargi, that the *Ākāśa* is woven as the warp and

the woof ' (Br. 3-8-11). Sometimes it is denoted by the term *akshara*, as for instance in the S'ruti ' He is greater than the great *akshara* ' (Mu. 2-1-2). And sometimes it is called Māyā. For the Mantra says Prakṛti is to be known to be Māyā, and the Supreme Lord to be the Māyin.' (S've. 4-10). "

SBh. 1-4-3, pp. 148, 149.

[ Here it is clear that s'akti is synonymous with Prakṛti the causal potentiality of the world, and is called Māyā also. The individual souls in that state, are enveloped in ignorance of their true nature, to wit, perfect identity with Brahman.]

The causal potentiality or Māyā is said to be *avidyātmika* ( of the nature of avidyā) which expression may be wrongly understood by the unwary to have a meaning identical with Avidyā. The following extract effectively wards off the possibility of such a mistake.

(२) ' सर्वज्ञस्येश्वरस्य आत्मभूते इवाविद्याकल्पिते नामरूपे तत्त्वान्यत्वाभ्यामनिर्वचनीये संसारप्रपञ्चबीजभूते, सर्वज्ञस्येश्वरस्य माया, शक्तिः, प्रकृतिः – इति च श्रुतिस्मृत्योरभिलप्येते ॥

" Fictitously imagined by Avidyā as though they were identical with the omniscient Lord, name and form undefinable either as (Is'vara) Himself or distinct from Him, the cause of this manifold world of mundane life, are called in the S'ruti and the Smṛti, 'Māyā', causal potentiality and Prakṛti."

SBh. 2-1-14, p. 201.

Here we find Māyā described as the figment of Avidyā, and identified with *Prakṛti*, the original state of the world before creation. It is called Māyā (illusory appearance) clearly because it cannot be defined to be identical with Īs'vara or Brahman or quite distinct from Brahman. Elsewhere, in the Bhāshyas, the expression *anirvacanīya* (तत्त्वान्यत्वाभ्यामनिर्वचनीय) has been explained by the illustration of foam which is not quite the same as water, but yet not a different entity either. This expression by the way, gave rise to the theory of *sadasadanirvacanīya* (apparent things which are neither being nor not being) developed in the sub-commentaries on S'ankara's works. In this passage not quoted here at full length, we find variants for the expression *avidyākalpata*, such as *avidyāpratyupasthāpita, avidyākṛta*, and *avidyātmaka* (presented by avidyā, made up of avidyā, and of the nature of avidyā) all of which mean the objective appearance due to Avidyā. Māyā, then, according to S'aṅkara is the illusory causal seed of the world, due to Avidyā (*Adhyāsa* or mutual superimposition of Atman and un-Atman, occassioned by want of discrimination).

15. The clarification of the concepts of creation and Māyā, is, incidentally, also the clarification of the concept of the Vedantic con-

cept of 'causality'. We have seen that the Śrutis speak of Brahman both as the creator and the material cause of the universe. But in what sense precisely is Brahman the cause? In order to be in a position to answer this question, it is necessary to understand the nature of the effect, the Universe itself. Here is Śaṅkara's picture of the Universe :—

(१) अस्य जगतः नामरूपाभ्यां व्याकृतस्य अनेककर्तृभोक्तृ-संयुक्तस्य प्रतिनियतदेशकालनिमित्तक्रियाफलाश्रयस्य मनसाप्यचिन्त्य-रचनारूपस्य जन्मस्थितिभङ्गं यतः सर्वज्ञात्, सर्वशक्तेः कारणात् भवति तद् ब्रह्म ॥

"The omniscent and omnipotent cause from which proceeds the origin, sustentation and dissolution of this universe – the universe which is differentiated by name and form, comprehends many agents and experiences (of the fruits of actions), and is the abode of the fruits of actions regulated by particular places, times and causes (the universe) whose creation is not even conceivable by the mind – that cause is Brahman." SBh. 1-1-2, p. 7.

This description is so comprehensive, including as it does even time, space and causation, in its scope, evidently forbids the conception of Brahman as the 'cause' of the universe in the ordinary sense of the word. Nor can we think of Brahman as the 'maker' of the world in the same sense that a carpenter is the maker of a table, for all agents

of action are within the universe, and Brahman or Īs'vara cannot be thought of as an agent who forms an idea, makes a plan of what he is to make, and then executes it. In what sense, then, is Brahman the cause and the world its effect? Here is Bādarāyaṇa's reply according to S'aṅkara:

(२) कार्यमाकाशादिकं बहुप्रपञ्चं जगत्, कारणं परं ब्रह्म । तस्मात् कारणात् परमार्थतोऽनन्यत्वं व्यतिरेकेणाभावः कार्यस्यावगम्यते । कुतः? आरम्भणशब्दादिभ्यः ॥

"The effect is this manifold world consisting of ether etc., and the cause is the Highest Brahman. The non-existence of the effect in reality apart from that cause is concluded. On what grounds? For the reason that the S'ruti declares that the effect is merely the play of words (वाचारम्भणम्) and for other similar reasons." SBh. 2-1-14, p. 196.

The word *Ādi* (etc.) in Bādarāyaṇa's Sūtra refers to the texts teaching the identity of the world with Brahman. Accordingly S'aṅkara says:

(३) 'आरम्भणशब्दादिभ्यः' इत्यादिशब्दात्, 'ऐतदात्म्यमिदं सर्वं तत्सत्यं स आत्मा तत्त्वमसि' (छां. ६-८-७), 'इदं सर्वं यदयमात्मा' (बृ. २-४-६), 'ब्रह्मैवेदं सर्वम्' ( ? ), 'आत्मैवेदं सर्वम्' (छां. ७-२५-२), 'नेह नानास्ति किञ्चन' (बृ. ४-४-१९) – इत्येवमाद्यपि आत्मैकत्वप्रतिपादनपरं वचनजातमुदाहर्तव्यम् ॥ सू. भा. २-१-१४, पा. १९७.

Here *the Chāndogya, the Bṛhadāraṇyaka* and other S'rutis teaching essential unity of the

world with the non-dual Atman or Brahman, are appealed to. It follows that this apparent world as we are aware of is only the effect of Māyā, and is essentially identical with and has no independent existence apart from Brahman. The following are explicit statements to this effect in the Bhāshya :—

(४) ननु शब्दादिहीनं ब्रह्म जगतः कारणम् । बाढम् । न तु शब्दादिमत्कार्यं कारणात्मना हीनं प्रागुत्पत्तेरिदानीं वा अस्ति ॥

" *Objection :-* But (according to you) Brahman devoid of qualities such as sound is the cause of the Universe (full of qualities) !

*Reply :-* Quite true, but the effect with qualities like sound, never exists except in its essential form as the cause whether now or before the creation. " SBh. 2-1-7, p. 189.

(५) तस्मात्, यथा घटकरकाद्याकाशानां महाकाशानन्यत्वम्, यथा च मृगतृष्णिकोदकादीनाम् ऊषरादिभ्यो अनन्यत्वम्, दृष्टनष्टस्वरूपत्वात्, स्वरूपेणानुपाख्यत्वात्, एवमस्य भोग्यभोक्त्रादिप्रपञ्चजातस्य ब्रह्मव्यतिरेकेणाभावः - इति द्रष्टव्यम् ॥

" Therefore it must be concluded that just as jar-space and pot-space and other apparent spaces are not other than the one ethereal space, and just as water in a mirage and other appearances are not other than the desert etc. for those ethers and water etc. are of the nature of being perceived and vanishing, undefinable in their apparent nature,

so also this manifold world of the experienced and experienees is not other than Brahman in essence."

SBh. 2–1–14, p. 197.

This extract places it beyond all doubt that by the Vedantic word 'effect' S'aṅkara understands nothing more than appearance, and consequently the 'cause' for him stands for the substrate on which appearances are superimposed. The student must be forewarned, however, that the so-called theory of origination of appearances from Avidyā (प्रातिभासिकवस्तूत्पत्तिवादः) a pet doctrine of the Post-S'āṅkaras is conspicuous by its absence in the Bhāshya. The doctrine of three grades of existance transcendental (पारमार्थिकसत्त्वं), empirical (व्यावहारिकसत्त्वं) and apparent (प्रातिभासिकसत्त्वं) is quite unknown to the Sūtra-Bhāshya. On the contrary S'aṅkara emphatically declares that there are no grades of existence :

(६) यथा च कारणं ब्रह्म त्रिषु कालेषु सत्त्वं न व्यभिचरति, एवं कार्यमपि जगत्त्रिषु कालेषु सत्त्वं न व्यभिचरति । एकं च पुनः सत्त्वम्, अतोऽप्यनन्यत्वं कारणात् कार्यस्य ॥

"Just as Brahman the cause never deviates from existence in all the three periods of time, so also the effect, the world, never deviates from existence in all the three periods (of creation, sustenance and dissolution). And *existence again is only one*. So for this reason also, the effect is none other than the cause." SBh. 2–1–16, p. 203.

Accordingly Śaṅkara says : ' तथा च लोकेऽनुभवः- शुक्तिका हि रजतवद्भवभासते, एकश्चन्द्रः सद्वितीयवत् इति । ' " And such is the experience of the common man – who says ' it is the nacre that looks like silver ', ' The one moon appears as though she had a duplicate." ( Int. SBh. p. 2 ). So according to him, it is only Brahman, that appears as the world and we have no real origination of the world at all. He avers this in so many words when he says :-

(७) अविद्याकल्पितेन च नामरूपलक्षणेन रूपभेदेन व्याकृताव्याकृतात्मकेन तत्त्वान्यत्वाभ्यामनिर्वचनीयेन ब्रह्म परिणामादिसर्वव्यवहारास्पदत्वं प्रतिपद्यते ; पारमार्थिकेन च रूपेण सर्वव्यवहारातीतम् अपरिणतम् अवतिष्ठते । वाचारम्भणमात्रत्वाच्चाविद्याकल्पितस्य रूपभेदस्य – इति न निरवयवत्वं ब्रह्मणः कुप्यति ॥

" Brahman becomes an object within the perview of empirical thought and expression dealing with transformation etc. in its special aspect of name and form, of the nature of the differentiated or the undifferentiated, which is undefinable either as (Brahman itself ) or something other than it. In its own real nature, however, it transcends all empirical thought and expression and is never changed." SBh. 2-1-27, p. 213.

This clarification of the concept of Māyā is to be found nowhere else except in Śaṅkara's exposition. Empirically speaking *Māyā* is the causal potentiality of the world, projected by

Avidyā, or Superimposition, it is but a special aspect of Brahman which evolves itself into the world. But Brahman in its true and real nature is above all causation.

> "And inasmuch as the special aspect of Brahman, fictitiously created by Avidyā, is a mere play of words. The fact of Brahman being impartible remains uncontradicted."
>
> SBh. 2-1-27, pp. 213, 214.

16. Before closing this discussion of creation and Māyā, we have to answer one more question. If there be really no creation, and causation be wholly Māyic only, a figment of Avidyā, how is it that we find so many different accounts of creation in the Upanishads? Is it a mere waste of words? Here is Śaṅkara's answer:

> (८) न चेयं परिणामश्रुतिः परिणामप्रतिपादनार्था, तत्प्रतिपत्तौ फलानवगमात् । सर्वव्यवहारहीनब्रह्मात्मभावप्रतिपादनार्था त्वेषा, तत्प्रतिपत्तौ फलावगमात् । 'स एष नेतिनेत्यात्मा' इत्युपक्रम्याह 'अभयं वै जनक प्राप्तोऽसि' (बृ. ४-२-४) इति । तस्मादस्मत्पक्षे न कश्चिदपि दोषप्रसङ्गोऽस्ति ॥
>
> "Nor does this Śruti teaching evolution, really purport to teach evolution as such; for no fruit is known to accrue by that knowledge. It rather aims at teaching the Atman of Brahmic Nature, for its knowledge is known to yield a good result. (To explain:) Yājñavalkya com-

mences his teaching with the proposition 'This is the Atman that has been described as 'not this, not this' and concludes 'Fearlessness, O Janaka, hast thou attained indeed.' (Br. 4-2-4). So, there is no defect in our interpretation of the Śruti."

SBh. 2-1-27, p. 214.

## 4. IS'VARA

17. The concept of Īs'vara is as enigmatical as, if not more so than, the conceptions of Māyā and Causation in Advaita to most of the modern critics of S'aṅkara. This is because these are all uniformly influenced by the current discussions of such topics in the light of the later sub-commentaries on S'aṅkara's works. The *Vivaraṇa* of Prakās'ātman, for instance, brings forward several alternative theories about the cause of the world such as these : (1) The original Brahman whose reflections are the individual souls, and which is associated with Māyā, is the cause ; (2) Brahman reflected in Māyā-Avidyā is the cause of the world ; (3) The individual souls themselves, each of them, manifest Brahman as the world through their private *avidyā* ; and there are as many worlds projected as there are Jīvas ; (4) Brahman itself changes into the world through its Avidyā, just as individuals manifest a world each.—P.V. p. 232.

And Appayya Dikshitar's *Siddhanta-Les'a-Sangraha*, brings forward a theory that Brahman associated with qualities is the cause of the world, and that released souls attain union with the Saguṇa-Brahman or Īs'vara only, until all the souls are ultimately released (SLS. p. 534–535).

Unconsciously swayed by such scholastic systems perhaps, the late Dr. Thibeaut wrote in the Introduction to his translation of S'aṅkara's Sūtra-Bhāshya as follows :—

> "Placing myself at the point of view of a S'āṇkara, I am startled at the outset by the second Sūtra of the first Adhyāya, which undertakes to give a definition of Brahman. ..... What, we must ask, is this Sūtra meant to define ?–That Brahman, we are inclined to answer, whose cognition the first Sūtra declares to constitute the task of the entire Vedanta, that Brahman whose cognition is the only road to final release, that in fact which S'aṅkara calls the highest. But here we must object to ourselves, the highest Brahman is not properly defined as that from which the world originates. ..... That from which the world proceeds can by a S'aṅkara be accepted only as a definition of Īs'vara –, of Brahman which by its association with Māyā is enabled to project the false appearanee of this world and it is as improbable that the Sūtras should oper. with a definition of that inferior principle from whose cognition there accrues no benefit, as it is unlikely that they should conclude with a descipline of the state of those who know the lower Brahman only."
>
> Vedanta Sutras Intro. p. XCII.

In this extract we find a glaring confusion of the connotations of the terms, Īs'vara, Para Brahman, and Lower Brahman. But where do we

have any warrant either in the Upanishads or in S'aṅkara's Bhāshya, for the supposition that *Apara Brahman* is 'lower' than the *Para Brahman*, or that Īs'vara is an inferior principle in comparison with Para Brahman ? Let us first see what the S'rutis themselves have to say on the subject.

18. We shall first of all cite the text where the terms 'Para Brahman' and 'Apara Brahman' occur :

(१) एतद्वै सत्यकाम परं चापरं च ब्रह्म यदोङ्कारस्तस्माद्विद्वानेतेनैवायतनेनैकतरमन्वेति ॥

" Verily, O Satyakāma, this Omkāra is both the Higher and the Lower Brahman. Therefore the devotee goes to either of these only through this source. " Pr. 5-2.

Perhaps this is the only text which expressly makes the distinction between the Higher and the Lower Brahman. There is another text in the Muṇḍaka which refers to Paramam Brahman :-

(२) स यो ह वै तत्परमं ब्रह्म वेद ब्रह्मैव भवति, नास्याब्रह्मवित्कुले भवति । तरति शोकं तरति पाप्मानं गुहाग्रन्थिभ्यो विमुक्तोऽमृतो भवति ॥

" Whosoever knows that Supreme Brahman indeed, becomes that very Brahman. In his family, no one is born that knows not Brahman. He crosses

lamentation, crosses sin ; freed from the knots of the heart, he becomes immortal." Mu. 3-2-9.

[ This Brahman whose knowledge results in attaining identity with Brahman, has been called *Akshara* (the Imperishable), *Satyam* (Reality), and *Purusha* (Person) also in this Upanishad.]

We find the word 'Īs'vara' in the following S'rutis :-

(३) तमीश्वराणां परमं महेश्वरं तं देवतानां परमं च दैवतम् ।
पतिं पतीनां परमं परस्ताद्विदाम देवं भुवनेशमीड्यम् ॥

" Him the Greatest Ruler of all rulers, Him the Highest God of all the gods, the Greatest Protector of all protectors, beyond all of them do we regard that Shining One ( देवम् ) Praiseworthy Ruler of the world. " Sve. 6-7.

[ The next two verses contain the word *s'akti* (शक्तिः) and *kāraṇam* ( कारणम् ) which we have already discussed.]

It is clear that the S'ruti makes no difference between Para Brahman and Īs'vara.

19. We may now proceed to consider S'aṅkara's views on the point. While opening the discussion about the interpretation of the text 'स एनान् ब्रह्म गमयति' ( He leads these to Brahman) S'aṅkara writes as follows :-

(१) 'स एनान् ब्रह्म गमयति' (छां. ४-१५-५) इत्यत्र विचिकित्स्यते - किं कार्यमपरं ब्रह्म गमयति, आहोस्वित् परमेव अधिकृतं मुख्यं ब्रह्म ? - इति । कुतः संशयः ? ब्रह्मशब्दप्रयोगात्,

गतिश्रुतेश्च । तत्र कार्यमेव सगुणम् अपरं ब्रह्म एनान् गमयत्यमानवः पुरुषः – इति बादरिराचार्यो मन्यते । कुतः ? अस्य गत्युपपत्तेः ॥

"The doubt arises whether the devotees are led to *Kārya* (effect), Apara (Lower), or Param (Higher) Brahman itself, *Avikṛtam* (unmodified), *mukhyam* (Brahman in the primary sense). Whence this doubt because of the word Brahman, and because of the S'ruti teaching movement. Here the teacher Bādari thinks that it is the *kārya* (effect), *Saguṇa* (with qualities), Aparam (Lower) Brahman, for motion is applicable only to this Brahman."

SBh. 4-3-7, p. 495.

In this context, S'aṅkara gives variants for both the terms Para-Brahman and Apara-Brahman. Now, do these denote two distinct entities or one and the same Brahman ? The following excerpt will answer this question :—

(३) तत्र परापरब्रह्मविवेकानवधारणेन अपरस्मिन् ब्रह्मणि वर्तमाना गतिश्रुतयः परस्मिन् अध्यारोप्यन्ते । किं द्वे ब्रह्मणी परम् अपरं चेति ? बाढं द्वे, 'एतद्वै सत्यकाम परं चापरं च ब्रह्म यदोङ्कारः' (प्र. ५-२) इत्यादिदर्शनात् । किं पुनः परं ब्रह्म किमपरमिति ? उच्यते । यत्र अविद्याकृतनामरूपादिविशेषप्रतिषेधात् अस्थूलादिशब्दैर्ब्रह्मोपदिश्यते, तत्परम् । तदेव यत्र नामरूपादिविशेषेण केनचिद् विशिष्टम् उपासनाय उपदिश्यते 'मनोमयः प्राणशरीरो भारूपः' (छां. ३-१४-२) इत्यादिशब्दैः, तदपरम् । नन्वेवम् अद्वितीयश्रुतिरुपरुध्येत । न । अविद्याकृतनामरूपोपाधिकतया परिहृतत्वात् ॥

" Here S'rutis teaching movement in the context of Apara-Brahman, have been wrongly applied to Para-Brahman, merely because of failure to discriminate between the Higher and the Lower Brahman.

*Question :-* Are there two Brahmans then, the Higher and the Lower ?

*Answer :-*Yes, there are two. (This is borne out) by the S'ruti ' O Satyakāma, verily this Omkāra is both the Higher and the Lower Brahman.

*Question :-* Which is the Higher Brahman then and which is the Lower ?

*Answer :-* We reply : Where Brahman is taught by means of words like *asthūlam* (not gross), negating specific features such as name and form created by Avidyā, that is the Higher Brahman. Where on the other hand that same Brahman is taught as qualified by some specific features for the purpose of meditation, as for instance by means of such words as मनोमयः (made up of mind), प्राणशरीरो (having Prāṇa for his body), भारूपः (of the nature of light) etc., that is the Lower Brahman.

*Objection :-* The S'ruti teaching non-duality would be violated in this case, then !

*Reply :-* No, for this has been obviated by stating that the form with attributes is due to the conditioning adjunct of name and form created by Avidyā. " SBh. 4-3-14, pp. 501, 502.

It is clear that one and the same Brahman is regarded as higher or lower according as specific features are denied in the S'ruti or ascribed to it for the sake of meditation in the sphere of Avidyā for the convenience of aspirants who cannot rise to the level of the absolutely featureless Pure Brahman. Brahman in itself, of course, remains in its pristine purity even when it is meditated upon as endowed with qualities by mediocre intellects. Hence it is that S'aṅkara does not hesitate to style even Brahman meditated upon as 'Para Brahman', when the context is clear enough that it is Brahman with qualities. Witness the following quotation :–

(४) 'अप्राणो ह्यमनाः शुभ्रः' (मुं. २-१-२) इति श्रुतिः शुद्धब्रह्मविषया । इयं तु 'मनोमयः प्राणशरीरः' (छां. ३-१४-२) इति सगुणब्रह्मविषया इति विशेषः । अतो विवक्षितगुणोपपत्तेः परमेव ब्रह्मोपास्यत्वेनोपदिष्टमिति गम्यते ॥

"'Without Prāṇas, without mind, pure' is a S'ruti relating to the Pure Brahman, while this S'ruti 'Made up of mind, having Prāṇa as his body etc.' (Ch. 3–14–2) refers to Brahman with qualities. This is the difference between the two texts. Therefore since the qualities intended to be taught by the S'ruti apply to Brahman only, we have to conclude that it is Para Brahman alone that is to be meditated upon." SBh. 1–2–2, p. 65.

It is obvious that Saguṇa Brahman intended for meditation has been itself styled Para Brahman, as nobody would fall into the error of imagining that Brahman without qualities is meant by that term. As to the propriety of applying the epithet 'Higher Brahman' here, it has to be noted that qualified Brahman is higher relatively as compared with the individual self. That this line of reasoning is justifiable according to Śaṅkara, is vouched by the following :

(५) ननु अपरब्रह्मपरिगृहे 'परं पुरुषम्' इति विशेषणं नोपपद्यते । नैष दोषः । पिण्डापेक्षया प्राणस्य परत्वोपपत्तेः ॥

"*Objection* :– If the lower Brahman is taken to be meant in this passage (Pr. 5–5), the epithet '*Param Purusham*' (the higher Person) would not be consistent.

*Reply* : This fallacy cannot be imputed here. For Prāṇa may himself be well regarded as 'higher,' relatively in comparison with Virāt."

SBh. 1–3–13.

[This is a discussion devoted to the interpretation in the *Prashna* Upanishad (5–2–5) where it has to be determined which Brahman is meant by 'the Higher Purusha' to be meditated upon through the symbol *Aum*. The *prima facie* view that it is the lower Brahman is sought to be justified by arguing that the word 'higher' is only relative.]

20. So much for the apparent inconsistency in the use of the adjectives 'higher' and 'lower'

with respect to Brahman. We have found that lower Brahman is not, according to S'aṅkara, either distinct from or inferior to higher Brahman in any way. It is identically the same Brahman that is sought to be known by the seekers of the highest grade or to be meditated upon by the middling aspirants. That Brahman is regarded as that from which the Universe originates, cannot militate against its being regarded as the higher Brahman, is readily seen from S'aṅkara's clarification of the concept of causation already discussed in the previous section. Without tarrying any more to discuss this objection, we may now proceed to an examination of the concept of Īs'vara as understood by S'aṅkara.

21. In his commentary on the second sūtra of *Śārīraka*, S'aṅkara writes :

(१) अस्य जगतः नामरूपाभ्यां व्याकृतस्य, अनेककर्तृभोक्तृसंयुक्तस्य, प्रतिनियतदेशकालनिमित्तक्रियाफलाश्रयस्य मनसाप्यचिन्त्यरचनारूपस्य जन्मस्थितिभङ्गं यतः सर्वज्ञात् सर्वशक्तेः कारणाद् भवति तद्ब्रह्म .... । न यथोक्तविशेषणस्य जगतः यथोक्तविशेषणम् ईश्वरं मुक्त्वा अन्यतः प्रधानात् अचेतनात्, अणुभ्योऽभावात् संसारिणो वा उत्पत्त्यादि संभावयितुं शक्यम् ॥

The first sentence which describes the nature of the Universe has already been translated on page 24. The second sentence says that,

"The origination etc. of the Universe with these characteristics cannot be possibly conceived to be effected by any cause other than the Īśvara possessing these qualities." SBh. 1-1-2.

It is clear that the secondless Brahman is equated here with Īśvara (Ruler) who is omniscient and omnipotent.

This apparent self-contradiction- that Brahman is featureless and at the same time possesses the qualities of omniscience and omnipotence – is what puzzled Thibeaut and made him remark "Placing myself at the point of view of a Śaṅkara, I am startled at the outset by the second Sūtra of the first Adhyāya" (Vs. Int. p. XCTI). But Śaṅkara persists in this identification of the absolutely featureless Brahman with Īśvara in the body of his Bhāshya throughout. Take for instance the following extract :—

(२) एवं प्राप्ते अभिधीयते। योऽयमदृश्यत्वादिगुणको भूत्योनिः, स परमेश्वर एव स्यान्नान्य इति। कथमेतदवगम्यते? धर्मोक्तेः। परमेश्वरस्य हि धर्मा इहोच्यमानो दृश्यते 'यः सर्वज्ञः सर्ववित्' (मुं. १-१-९) इति॥

"To this objection we reply ; This source of all beings, the possessor of qualities like invisibility etc. is the highest Lord only and nothing else. How is this conclusion arrived at ? Beeause His attributes have been cited. (To explain :)

The clause 'He who is all-knowing and all-perceiving' evidently refers to the exclusive attribute of the Highest Lord." SBh. 1-2-21, p. 83.

It is evident that negations of specific features have been here spoken of as though they were qualities, and that very Brahman without features has been styled as the Highest Is'vara.

22. The derivative meaning of the word Is'vara is 'ruler'. It would be interesting to enquire how S'aṅkara, an Absolutist who postulates One Brahman without a second, reconciles himself to the idea of a ruler and admits the distinction of an omniscient ruler and the ruled into his system without self-contradiction. The following extract throws abundant light on this point :—

(१) कूटस्थब्रह्मात्मवादिनः एकत्वैकान्त्यात्, ईशित्रीशितव्याभावे, ईश्वरकारणप्रतिज्ञाविरोध इति चेत्, न ; अविद्यात्मकनामरूपबीजव्याकरणापेक्षत्वात् सर्वज्ञत्वस्य। 'तस्माद्वा एतस्मादात्मन आकाशः संभूतः' (तै. २-१) इत्यादिवाक्येभ्यो नित्यशुद्धबुद्धमुक्तस्वरूपात्, सर्वज्ञात्, सर्वशक्तेः, ईश्वरात्, जगज्जनिस्थितिप्रलया नाचेतनात् प्रधानात्, अन्यस्माद्वा इत्येषोऽर्थः प्रतिज्ञातः 'जन्माद्यस्य यतः' (वे.सू. १-१-२) इति। सा प्रतिज्ञा तदवस्थैव न तद्विरुद्धोऽर्थः पुनरिहोच्यते। कथं नोच्यते अत्यन्तमात्मनः एकत्वम् अद्वितीयत्वं च ब्रुवता? शृणु यथा नोच्यते। सर्वज्ञस्येश्वरस्य आत्मभूते इवाविद्याकल्पिते नामरूपे तत्त्वान्यत्वाभ्याम् अनिर्वचनीये संसारप्रपञ्चबीजभूते सर्वज्ञस्येश्वरस्य माया, शक्तिः, प्रकृतिः – इति च श्रुतिस्मृत्योरभिलप्येते। ताभ्यामन्यः सर्वज्ञ ईश्वरः 'आकाशो वै नाम नामरूपयोर्निर्वहिता' (छां. ८-१४-१) इति श्रुतेः। .....

एवमविद्याकृतनामरूपोपाध्यनुरोधी ईश्वरो भवति, व्योमेव घटकरकाद्युपाध्यनुरोधि । स च स्वात्मभूतानेव घटाकाशस्थानीयान् अविद्याप्रत्युपस्थापितनामरूपकृतकार्यकरणसङ्घातानुरोधिनो जीवाख्यान् विज्ञानात्मनः प्रतीष्टे व्यवहारविषये । तदेवम् अविद्यात्मकोपाधि-परिच्छेदापेक्षमेवेश्वरस्य ईश्वरत्वम्, सर्वज्ञत्वम्, सर्वशक्तित्वं च ; न परमार्थतो विद्यया अपास्तसर्वोपाधिस्वरूपे आत्मनि ईशित्रीशितव्य-सर्वज्ञत्वादिव्यवहार उपपद्यते । तथा चोक्तम् 'यत्र नान्यत्पश्यति नान्यच्छृणोति नान्यद्विजानाति स भूमा' (छां. ७-२४-१) इति । 'यत्र त्वस्य सर्वमात्मैवाभूत् तत्केन कं पश्येत्' (बृ. ४-५-१५) इत्यादिना च ॥ SBh. 2-1-14, pp. 200, 201.

The objection is started here that for one who holds the doctrine of the unity of the one changeless Brahmātman, there can be no distinction of a ruler and something ruled, and hence, this would counter the fundamental tenet of accepting Īs'vara as the cause of the world. And the answer is that the doctrine of Causality is Māyic, but the omniscient Īs'vara himself is distinct from the mayic name and form. We have quoted this portion of the Bhāshya already (on p. 22), in connection with the clarification of the concept of Māyā.

The sequal to this portion, has now to be reviewed in connection with the concept of Īs'vara, which is the subject-matter of the present section. S'aṅkara here says :

"Thus (Brahman) conditioned by name and form set up by Avidyā becomes Īs'vara, just as universal ether limited as it were by jars, pots etc. And empirically speaking he (the Is'vara) rules over the souls conditioned by individual consciousness *(Vijñānātmanah)* called *Jīvas*, who are really one with Himself, but who like the jar-spaces of the illustration depend upon aggrigates of the body and the senses effected by name and form presented by Avidyā. Thus the Lordship of the Lord, his omniscience and omnipotence are only relative to the limitation caused by the conditioning adjuncts of the nature of Avidyā. But in the Atman really divested of all conditioning factors on the dawn of Vidyā, there cannot be any room for conceptions like the ruler and the ruled, omniscience etc. Accordingly, it has been declared in the S'ruti 'That is the Infinite, where one sees nothing else, hears nothing else, knows nothing else' (Ch. 7-24-1) and also by the text beginning with 'But when for this one all has become the Atman alone, then what could one possibly see and with what?' (Bṛ. 4-5-15)" SBh. 2-1-14, p. 201.

23. If Brahman alone is really real, and without a second, in what sense is it *Sarvajña* (omniscient), *Sarvas'akta* (omnipotent)? Is it not a contradiction in terms to say that there is no act of knowing on the part of Brahman and yet it is all-knowing, it exercises no power and yet it is all-powerful? How can Brahman know at

all before creation since it has no corporal adjunct then and, as we all know, body is a necessary pre-requisite for consciousness to arise ?

The Śruti says in reply to all this :

(१) न तस्य कार्यं करणं च विद्यते न तत्समश्चाभ्यधिकश्च दृश्यते ।
परास्य शक्तिर्विविधैव श्रूयते स्वाभाविकी ज्ञानबलक्रिया च ॥

" He has no body and no senses. There is none equal to or greater than Him. His supreme power is heard to be variously described, and belonging to his very nature is his knowledge, strength and act." Sve. 6–8.

[ Consciousness is here described as Brahman's very nature, and so is his power.]

The following extracts from the Bhāshya pondered over, would throw abundant light on the true nature of the consciousness and power ascribed to the changeless Brahman without a second :

(२) यस्य हि सर्वविषयावभासनक्षमं ज्ञानं नित्यमस्ति, सोऽसर्वज्ञ इति विप्रतिषिद्धम् । अनित्यत्वे हि ज्ञानस्य कदाचिज्जानाति, कदाचिच्च जानातीत्यसर्वज्ञत्वमपि स्यात्, नासौ ज्ञाननित्यत्वे दोषोऽस्ति ॥

" It is a self-contradiction to maintain that one who possesses eternal consciousness capable of throwing light on everything, is not omniscient. If his knowledge were impermanent, he could know things sometimes, and could not know at other

times, and consequently it would follow that he may not be omniscient. This defect is inconceivable in case his consciousness is eternal."

SBh. 1-1-5, p. 27.

[ Consciousness being his very nature, it is inconceivable that he does not know certain things on certain occasions.]

(३) शक्तिश्च कारणस्य कार्यनियमार्था कल्प्यमाना नान्या, असती वा कार्यं नियच्छेत्। असत्त्वाविशेषात्, अन्यत्वाविशेषाच्च। तस्मात्, कारणस्याऽऽत्मभूता शक्तिः, शक्तेश्चाऽऽत्मभूतं कार्यम्॥

"The power which may be supposed to inhere in the cause in order to ensure a particular effect (and no other), cannot ensure the production of the particular effect if it is other than the cause, or non-existent. For in that case, it would be quite like any other thing which is non-existent or other than the cause (and there could be no valid reason why that cause alone should produce the particular effect). Hence we have to conclude that the power is identical with the cause, and the effect is identical with the power." SBh. 2-1-18, p. 204.

24. To sum up, S'aṅkara's conception of Para Brahman, Apara Brahman and Īs'vara is that the same Brahman is called Higher Brahman when it is made the subject of enquiry as Reality, Lower Brahman when it is recommended in the S'rutis as an object of meditation, and Īs'vara or the omniscient and omnipotent when it is thought of as the cause and ruler of the phenomenal world

containing individual souls. The distinction is admitted only from the thought-position of the student of Vedanta and there is no distinction or difference allowed in Brahman itself. The so-called consciousness and power of the Divine being are eternally identical with the Being and it is only relativity that makes Vedantins speak of God's knowing or being the potential cause of an effect, just as it is in empirical life when we say ' fire burns the faggot ', ' the river flows ' or ' the sun shines upon the snake when it creeps out of the anthill '. It is clear that the Absolutism of Advaita is in no way affected by these conventional ways of thinking or speaking.

## 5. BONDAGE AND RELEASE

25. We have seen that S'aṅkara's clarification of the concept of Īs'vara demands the supposition of two distinct stand-points. Īs'vara controls the destiny of individual souls only in the sphere of the common-sense view ( जीवाख्यान् विज्ञानात्मनः प्रतीष्टे व्यवहारविषये ); from the standpoint of the really real, however, there is no distinction of the ruler and the ruled, or omniscience and limited knowledge at all. ( न परमार्थतः ... आत्मनि ईशित्रीशितव्यसर्वज्ञत्वादिव्यवहार उपपद्यते । ) On what basis this distinction of the two view-points is formed, we shall consider later on. Meanwhile if we grant that the distinction of the Ruler and the ruled is true on the empirical plane only, it follows as a corollary that the idea of bondage and release for the soul is also true on that plane only. The S'ruti sanctions this deduction :—

(१) संयुक्तमेतत् क्षरमक्षरं च व्यक्ताव्यक्तं भरते विश्वमीशः ।
अनीशश्चात्मा बुध्यते भोक्तृभावात् ज्ञात्वा देवं मुच्यते सर्वपाशैः ॥

" This changeful and the changeless, both the evolved and the involved Universe mutually correlated, the Īs'a supports. The helpless individual Atman is bound on account of being an experiencer (of fruit of action). By knowing that Shining One, however, he is freed from all bonds." Sve. 1-8.

(२) पुरमेकादशद्वारमजस्यावक्रचेतसः ।
अनुष्ठाय न शोचति विमुक्तश्च विमुच्यते ॥

"This citadel of eleven gates belongs to the Unborn whose nature as consciousness is never crooked. Meditating on Him through knowledge, one grieves not. And being freed, he is freed for ever." Ka. 5-1.

26. Texts like the ones we have just now quoted, teach in the clearest manner that knowledge of the true nature of Atman alone can release the soul, thereby implying that it is Avidyā or primeval ignorance only that binds the soul. The following S'ruti is explicit on this latter point :

(३) ते तमर्चयन्तस्त्वं हि नः पिता योऽस्माकमविद्यायाः परं पारं तारयसि ॥

"Worshipping him (Pippalāda), Bhāradvāja and others gratefully said 'Thou art indeed our real father, for thou hast taken us across our ignorance (Avidyā) to the other shore." Pr. 6-8.

27. S'aṅkara appeals to Upanishadic texts of this type when he propounds his doctrine of *Moksha* (Release) :—

(१) एवमविद्यादिदोषवतां धर्माधर्मतारतम्यनिमित्तं शरीरोपादानपूर्वकं सुखदुःखतारतम्यम् अनित्यं संसाररूपं श्रुतिस्मृतिन्यायप्रसिद्धम् । तथा च श्रुतिः 'न ह वै सशरीरस्य सतः प्रियाप्रिययोरपहतिरस्ति' (छां. ८-१२-१) इति यथावर्णितं संसाररूपम् अनुवदति । 'अशरीरं

**वाव सन्तं न प्रियाप्रिये स्पृशतः' (छां. ८-१२-१) इति प्रियाप्रिय-स्पर्शनप्रतिषेधात्, चोदनालक्षणधर्मकार्यत्वं मोक्षाख्यस्य अशरीरत्वस्य प्रतिषिध्यत इति गम्यते ॥**

"This nature of *Saṁsārā* (mundane life), the ephemeral experience of pleasure and pain of changing degrees by assuming different bodies due to gradation of meritorious and unmeritorious deeds of beings subject to defects like Avidyā, is well-known from S'rutis, Smṛtis and reasoning. Accordingly the S'ruti reaffirms this nature of *Saṁsārā* as described above when it says 'There is indeed no freedom from the oppression of pleasure and pain for a being so long as it is embodied' (Ch. 8-12-1), and since contact of pleasure and pain is denied for the liberated one by the S'ruti 'Pleasure and pain, indeed, do not touch one who is without a body' (Ch. 8-12-1), it can be inferred that unembodiedness called Mōksha is not an effect of meritorious deeds (धर्म) known through the Vedic injunctions." SBh. 1-1-4, p. 14.

**(२) अशरीरत्वमेव धर्मकार्यम् इति चेत्, न। तस्य स्वाभाविक-त्वात्। 'अशरीरं शरीरेष्वनवस्थेष्ववस्थितम्। महान्तं विभुमात्मानं मत्वा धीरो न शोचति' (का. २-२२), 'अप्राणो ह्यमनाः शुभ्रः' (मुं. २-१-२), 'असङ्गो ह्ययं पुरुषः' (बृ. ४-३-१५) इत्यादि-श्रुतिभ्यः। अत एव अनुष्ठेयकर्मफलविलक्षणं मोक्षाख्यम् अशरीरत्वं नित्यम् इति सिद्धम् ॥**

"*Objection :* Unembodiedness may be itself the effect of Vedic Dharma.

*Reply :* No, for that is the very nature of Atman. Witness the following S'rutis : The wise person

who knows the Atman that is unembodied even while he is in the bodies, changeless among the changeful bodies, one who knows this great and all-pervading Atman never grieves' (K. 2-22), 'He is indeed without Pr̥ṇa (life-breath) and without Manas (mind) and pure' (Mu. 2-1-2), 'This Purusha (Person) is indeed never tainted by anything' (Br̥. 4-3-15). For this very reason, it is to be concluded that unembodiedness called Mōksha (Final Release) is quite unlike any effect of religious work which has got to be performed."

SBh. 1-1-4, p. 14.

28. Śaṅkara reinforces his argument that final release is only the dispersal of ignorance and no more, by appealing to Śrutis that teach immediate release as soon as enlightenment dawns.

(१) अपि च 'ब्रह्म वेद ब्रह्मैव भवति' (मुं. ३-२-९), 'क्षीयन्ते चास्य कर्माणि तस्मिन् दृष्टे परावरे' (मुं. २-२-८), 'आनन्दं ब्रह्मणो विद्वान् । न बिभेति कुतश्चन' (तै २-९), 'अभयं वै जनक प्राप्तोऽसि' (बृ. ४-२ ४), 'तदात्मानमेवावेदहं ब्रह्मास्मीति तस्मात्तत्सर्वमभवत्' (बृ. १-४-१०), 'तत्र को मोहः कः शोक एकत्वमनुपश्यतः' (ई. ७) – इत्येवमाद्याः श्रुतयः, ब्रह्मविद्यानन्तरं मोक्षं दर्शयन्त्यः, अन्ये कार्यान्तरं वारयन्ति ॥

"Moreover Śrutis like these point out that Mōksha accrues immediately after the dawn of the knowledge of Brahman, and thus precludes the necessity for anything else to be done in the interval before Release. 'One who knows Brahman, becomes Brahman itself' (Mu. 3-2-9),

'When that Brahman which is the Higher as well as the lower is seen, all his residual works perish' (Mu. 2-2-8), 'Knowing the bliss of Brahman, one fears nothing whatever' (Tai. 2-9), 'O Janaka, fearlessness, indeed, hast thou attained' (Br. 4-2-4), 'It knew itself in the form 'I am Brahman' and thence it became all' (Br. 1-4-10), 'What delusion, and what lamentation can there be for one who has realized oneness?' (Is. 7)." SBh. 1-1-4, p. 14, 15.

(२) तथा 'तद्धैतत् पश्यन्नृषिर्वामदेवः प्रतिपेदे अहं मनुरभवं सूर्यश्च' (बृ. १-४-१०) इति ब्रह्मदर्शनसर्वात्मभावयोर्मध्ये कर्तव्यान्तरवारणाय उदाहार्यम्। यथा 'तिष्ठन् गायति' इति तिष्ठतिगायत्योर्मध्ये तत्कर्तृकं कार्यान्तरं नास्तीति गम्यते॥

"We might likewise quote the passage (Br. 1-4-10) 'Seeing this same Brahman Rshi Vamadeva discovered (the Mantra) 'I have been Manu and Surya' to show how the Śruti wards off the idea of something to be done in the interval between realization of Brahman and becoming all this Universe. This passage is analogous to the statement 'He sings standing' where it is conclusive that there is no action intervening between the acts of standing and singing." SBh. 1-1-4, p. 15.

29. There is a special advantage, in thus conceiving Mōksha, for as Śaṅkara shows :

अतोऽविद्याकल्पितसंसारित्वनिवर्तनेन नित्यमुक्तात्मस्वरूपसमर्पणान्न मोक्षस्यानित्यत्वदोषः॥

"Hence as the śāstras remove the idea of one's being a transmigratory soul imagined by

> Avidyā and reveal one's nature as the eternally free Atman, no blemish of impermanence can be attached to Release." SBh. 1-1-4, p. 16.

It is a tenet acknowledged by all schools of Vedanta, that Mōksha is eternal, but no school other than that of Śaṅkara, can escape the charge of the so-called Final Goal being impermanent seeing that all these schools treat the *Summum Bonum* as the effect of some religious act of discipline enjoined in the Śrutis. Śaṅkara's tradition is unique in treating the bondage of mundane suffering as the figment of nescience and Release as the result of right knowledge arising from the teaching of the Upanishads.

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## 6. THE VALIDITY OF S'ASTRA

30. 'S'āstra' is a name assigned by Vedantins to the Vedas in general and to the Upanishads in particular. Thus in commenting on the third Sūtra of Bādarāyaṇa, S'aṅkara writes

(१) महतः ऋग्वेदादेः शास्त्रस्य अनेकविद्यास्थानोपबृंहितस्य प्रदीपवत् सर्वार्थावद्योतिनः सर्वज्ञकल्पस्य योनिः कारणं ब्रह्म। न हीदृशस्य शास्त्रस्य ऋग्वेदादिलक्षणस्य सर्वज्ञगुणान्वितस्य सर्वज्ञादन्यतः संभवोऽस्ति ॥

"Brahman is the source, the cause of the great S'āstra consisting of Rigveda etc. enlarged by various branches of learning which illumins all things like a big lamp, and which is almost omniscient. For the origination of such a S'āstra consisting of Rigveda etc., which is accompanied by the quality of omniscience, can hardly be conceived to proceed from anything but from an omniscient being." SBh. 1-1-3, p. 9.

[In the sequel to this para, it is argued that omniscience reaches its culmination only in the Great Being from whom Rigveda etc. comes forth spontaneously like an expired breath.]

31. The present section is exclusively devoted to a consideration of the validity of the S'āstra in its aspect as the Upanishads. How are the Upanishads to be considered as a valid means of right knowledge? Are they the source of knowledge

regarding Brahman, in the same way that the Vedas are with regard to heaven (स्वर्गः), the gods (देवताः) etc., whose existence is to be taken for granted on the exclusive authority of the Vedas enjoining certain rituals which lead to them the performer of those religious works fter death ? Here is Śaṅkara's answer :

(१) न धर्मजिज्ञासायामिव श्रुत्यादय एव प्रमाणं ब्रह्मजिज्ञासायाम्, किं तु श्रुत्यादयोऽनुभवादयश्च यथासंभवमिह प्रमाणम् । अनुभवावसानत्वाद् भूतवस्तुविषयत्वाच्च ब्रह्मज्ञानस्य । कर्तव्ये हि विषये नानुभवापेक्षास्तीति श्रुत्यादीनामेव प्रामाण्यं स्यात् । पुरुषाधीनात्मलाभत्वाच्च कर्तव्यस्य .... । न तु वस्तु एवम्, नैवम्, अस्ति, नास्ति – इति वा विकल्प्यते । विकल्पनास्तु पुरुषबुद्ध्यपेक्षाः । न वस्तुयाथात्म्यज्ञानं पुरुषबुद्ध्यपेक्षम्, किं तर्हि वस्तुतन्त्रमेव तत् ॥

" Śruti etc. alone are not the means of knowledge in the case of the enquiry into the nature of Brahman, as it is in the enquiry with regard to the nature of Dharma (Religious work), but Śruti etc. and intuition etc. also as the case may be, are here the means, for the knowledge of Brahman is to culminate in intuition, and relates to a factual existent entity. ( To explain : ) With regard to a religious duty, there being no need of any intuition, Śruti etc. alone can be deemed to be the valid means, and this for the additional reason that the origination of religious duty entirely depends upon the will of a person.....but an existent thing cannot in this manner be conceived alternatively to be such or not such, existent or non-existent at one's will.

Alternative thoughts with regard to a thing, depend entirely upon the imagination of a person, but the truth of a thing does not depend upon the will of a person but depends entirely upon the nature of the thing.'' SBh. 1-1-2, p. 8.

Elsewhere S'aṅkara makes his view clearer with regard to the matter in hand :—

(२) कर्मफले हि स्वर्गादौ अनुभवानारूढे स्यादाशङ्का भवेद्वा न वा इति । अनुभवारूढं तु ज्ञानफलम् 'यत्साक्षादपरोक्षाद्ब्रह्म' (बृ. ३-४-१) इति श्रुतेः । 'तत्त्वमसि' (छां. ६-८) इति च सिद्ध वदुपदेशात् । न हि 'तत्त्वमसि' इत्यस्य वाक्यस्य अर्थः, 'तत् त्वं मृतो भविष्यसि' इत्येवं परिणेतुं शक्यः ॥

"In the case of the result of religious works, which is not within the range of intuition, a doubt may possibly arise as to whether it would come true or not. But the result of knowledge is within the range of intuition, for the S'ruti refers to it as 'That which is actual and directly known' (Br. 3-4-1), and teaches the identity of the individual self and the Universal Self, in these words 'That thou art' (Ch. 6-8-7) as an ever-existing fact. Surely the sentence 'That thou art' cannot be stretched to mean 'That thou shalt become after death.''

SBh. 3-3-32, p. 407.

32. A doubt may possibly rear its head here : How can the Upanishadic texts convey an idea of what Brahman is to us ? Sentences are made up of words and words can denote or connote only

objective things which possess predicables like genus, quality, action or relation. But in the Upanishads Brahman is not only denied all attributes, but also declared to be strictly inexpressible by words and unthinkable by the mind :

(१) एतद्वै तदक्षरं गार्गि ब्राह्मणा अभिवदन्त्यस्थूलमनण्वह्रस्वमदीर्घमलोहितमस्नेहमच्छायमतमोऽवाय्वनाकाशमसङ्गमरसमगन्धमचक्षुष्कमश्रोत्रमवागमनोऽतेजस्कमप्राणममुखममात्रमनन्तरमबाह्यं न तदश्नाति किञ्चन न तदश्नाति कश्चन ॥

" This indeed, O Gārgi ! Brāhmaṇas regard to be that *Akshara* (the Imperishable). It is neither gross nor subtle ; neither short nor long ; not red, not viscid, without shadow or darkness, not air, no ether, unattached ; without taste, without smell, having no eyes, having no ears, having no organs of speech, having no mind, having no light, having no life-breath, having no opening, having no measures and having neither inside nor outside. It eats nothing whatever. No one eats it. " Br. 3-8-8.

(२) यतो वाचो निवर्तन्ते । अप्राप्य मनसा सह ॥

" Whence speech ( and other organs of sense ) return unable to reach it, along with the mind."
Tai. 2-9.

It is ineffable not because words are inadequate to describe it, but because, it is the eternal subject which objectifies everything else and so can be objectified by no words.

(३) यद्वाचाऽनभ्युदितं येन वागभ्युद्यते ॥ .....
यन्मनसा न मनुते येनाहुर्मनो मतम् ।
तदेव ब्रह्म त्वं विद्धि नेदं यदिदमुपासते ॥

"That which speech cannot express, but which itself expresses speech ..... That which the mind cannot think of, but which itself, they say, thinks of the mind. Know that alone to be Brahman, not this which they meditate upon as an object."

Ke. 1-5, 6.

Thus, Brahman is beyond the region of the senses and the mind which alone are the instruments through which one can know objective things in ordinary life. On the other hand it is of such a nature that it shines forth by its own inherent light and lights up both the senses and the mind and enables them to throw light on their respective objects. If so, it will be asked, how can even the S'ruti describe Brahman which is the light of eternal Witnessing Consciousness, which is the prerequisite to know even the Vedas as such ?

33. S'aṅkara points out that there being no need for any means to establish the existence of Brahma-Atman (Brahman that is our very self), the S'rutis are called Pramāṇa (means of knowledge) by courtesy in so far as they remove the distinctions superimposed upon Brahman by

Avidyā. We have seen that Avidyā is the mutual superimposition of the Self and the not-Self, and it is only through ignorance that we speak of the means and objects of knowledge :

(१) तमेतम् अविद्याख्यम् आत्मानात्मनोरितरेतराध्यासं पुरस्कृत्य सर्वे प्रमाणप्रमेयव्यवहाराः लौकिका वैदिकाश्च प्रवृत्ताः, सर्वाणि च शास्त्राणि विधिप्रतिषेधमोक्षपराणि ॥

"It is by presupposing this mutual superimposition of the Self and the not-self, called *Avidyā*, that the conventions both secular and sacred of the means and object of right knowledge obtain in life, and so do the S'āstras dealing with injunctions and prohibitions and even with final Release." SBh., p. 2.

(२) न ह्यात्मा आगन्तुकः कस्यचित्, स्वयंसिद्धत्वात् ॥

"Atman or Self as is well-known is no adventitious thing for any one, for he is self-established." SBh. 2-3-7, p. 268.

(३) अविषयत्वे ब्रह्मणः शास्त्रयोनित्वानुपपत्तिरिति चेत्, न; अविद्याकल्पितभेदनिवृत्तिपरत्वाच्छास्त्रस्य । न हि शास्त्रम् इदंतया विषयभूतं ब्रह्म प्रतिपिपादयिषति, किं तर्हि, प्रत्यगात्मत्वेन अविषयतया प्रतिपादयत् अविद्याकल्पितं वेद्य-वेदितृ-वेदनादिभेदमपनयति ॥

"*Objection :* If Brahman is not an object of any action, then it cannot be maintained that the S'āstra is the means of knowing it.

*Reply :* Not so, for the S'āstra purports to wipe off the distinctions superimposed on Brahman by Avidyā. (To explain :-) The S'āstra does not

indeed propose to teach Brahman as such and such an object, but it teaches Brahman as no object at all, being the inmost self and removes all distinctions created by Avidyā such as the knowable, knower and knowledge." SBh. 1-1-4, p. 16.

The word आदि ('such as') in this passage includes the distinctions of (1) desired object, desirer, and desire, (2) deed, doer and doing, and (3) experienced fruit of action, experiencer and experience. All of these being superimposed on Brahman vanish the moment that Brahman is intuited as Reality devoid of all distinctions and differences. Appearances, as is well-known, have no existence of their own apart from the substrate on which they are superimposed and their sublation merely means the knowledge of their essential oneness with the substrate.

34. The S'āstra therefore, is a valid means of knowledge regarding Brahman in so far as it brings on the intuition of Brahman by showing how all distinctions and differences are mere appearances superimposed on Brahman. Even the empirical means of knowledge like perception, are held to be valid for this very same reason that they ultimately produce actual intuition of their object. Our effort to see a thing, for instance, ends with the dawn of sight, the

intuition of the thing sought to be seen. But then there is this difference between the ordinary means of right knowledge and the Śāstra as a means of knowing Brahman: Even after we have perceived or inferred the existence of a phenomenal thing, the distinction of the knower, knowable and knowledge stays on as before; whereas when the knowledge of Brahma-Atman dawns, this distinction is sublated for good. The following remarks of Śaṅkara about this final intuition are worthy of note :—

(१) अपि चान्त्यमिदं प्रमाणम् आत्मैकत्वस्य प्रतिपादकम्, नातः परं किञ्चिदाकाङ्क्षणमस्ति । यथा हि लोके 'यजेत' इत्युक्ते किम् ? केन ? कथम् ? – इत्याकाङ्क्षते, नैवं 'तत्त्वमसि', 'अहं ब्रह्मास्मि' इत्युक्ते किञ्चिदन्यदाकाङ्क्षणम् अस्ति, सर्वात्मैकत्वविषयत्वावगतेः । सति हि अन्यस्मिन्नवशिष्यमाणे अर्थे आकाङ्क्षा स्यात्; न त्वात्मैकत्व-व्यतिरेकेणावशिष्यमाणोऽन्योऽर्थोऽस्ति य आकाङ्क्षेत ॥

"Moreover, this means of knowledge revealing the unity of Atman is final; and there is nothing else that can be sought to be known subsequently. (To explain:-) When for instance in common usage it is laid down that 'One should sacrifice', it is at once sought to be known, what, by what means, and how (one is to sacrifice); but there is nothing else to be sought to be known when it is said 'That thou art', 'I am Brahman'; for the resulting intuition relates to the unity of the Self of all. It is only when something else remains, that the desire

to know it can possibly arise. But there is nothing else which remains to be known over and above the unity of Atman." SBh. 2-1-14, p. 199.

(२) न चेयमवगतिर्नोत्पद्यत इति शक्यं वक्तुम्। 'तद्धास्य विजज्ञौ' इत्यादिश्रुतिभ्यः॥

"Nor is it possible to maintain that no such intuition is ever produced, for there are S'rutis like the following 'He was convinced of this instruction of his father' (Ch. 6-13-3)." SBh. 2-1-14, p. 199.

[The S'ruti is not quoted here as a mere authority, for preceding this statement there is a series of questions and answers in the train of arguments based upon intuition.]

(३) न चेयमवगतिरनर्थिका भ्रान्तिर्वा इति शक्यं वक्तुम्; अविद्यानिवृत्तिफलदर्शनात्, बाधकज्ञानान्तराभावाच्च। प्राक्चात्मैकत्वाव-गतेरव्याहतः सर्वः सत्यानृतव्यवहारो लौकिको वैदिकश्च – इत्यवोचाम॥

"Nor, again, is it possible to assert that this intuition is useless, or that it is a hallucination, for we do see that *Avidyā* is effectively removed, and there is no other knowledge to sublate it. We have already remarked that all talk of the true and the false is only before the dawn of the knowledge of the unity of Atman."

SBh. 2-1-14, pp. 199, 200.

[There can be no question of error in the sphere of non-duality.]

35. This unique conception of the finality of knowledge and extinction of all means of

knowledge, the Śāstra no less than the other ordinary means, at the dawn of enlightenment, has been expressly stated in so many words elsewhere by Śaṅkara :

(१) तस्मात्, अहं ब्रह्मास्मि – इत्येतदवसाना एव सर्वे विधयः, सर्वाणि चेतराणि प्रमाणानि । न हि अहेयानुपादेयाद्वैतात्मावगतौ निर्विषयाणि अप्रमातृकाणि च प्रमाणानि भवितुमर्हन्तीति ॥

"Therefore, all injunctions and all other means of knowledge, end with the dawn of the intuition 'I am Brahman'. For when the intuition of the secondless Atman neither to be accepted or shunned arises, Pramāṇas (or means of knowledge) cannot continue to thrive, since there will be neither a knower nor objects to be known then." SBh. 1–1–4, p. 23, 24.

(२) 'अत्र पिताऽपिता भवति' इत्युपक्रम्य 'वेदा अवेदाः' (बृ. ४-३-२२) इतिवचनात् इष्यत एवास्माभिः श्रुतेरप्यभावः प्रबोधे ॥

"Since there is the text beginning with 'Here the father ceases to be the father' which says 'The Vedas are no Vedas' (Br. 4–3–22), non-existence of even the Śruti is certainly accepted by us in the state of enlightenment." SBh. 4–1–3, p. 465.

36. As a corollary from the validity of the Śāstra it follows that the words of a duly qualified teacher are as valid a means as the holy revelation itself, not because he is an authority on the subject, but because he has become one with the

Supreme Atman. One would reach at the truth provided that he follows the line of reasoning shown by such a teacher, but not by any independent ratiocination :—

(३) नैषा तर्केण मतिरापनेया प्रोक्ताऽन्येनैव सुज्ञानाय प्रेष्ठ ॥

"This knowledge, my dearest boy, cannot be acquired or refuted by speculation, but only as revealed by a teacher other than a speculator, can it lead to conviction." Ka. 2–9.

(४) न नरेणावरेण प्रोक्त एष सुविज्ञेयो बहुधा चिन्त्यमानः।
अनन्यप्रोक्ते गतिरत्र नास्ति अणीयान्ह्यतर्क्यमणुप्रमाणात् ॥

"Taught by a person of inferior knowledge, this Atman cannot be well-ascertained even if one should reason in various ways. There is no not-knowing, however, when taught by a teacher who has become one with this Atman. For He (this Atman) is subtler than even the subtlest thing and beyond all reason." Ka. 2–8.

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## 7. THE EMPIRICAL AND THE TRANSCENDENTAL VIEWS

37. Avidyā is the most fundamental of all the concepts we have so far considered. Man as he is born, including the most intelligent of his kind who can distinguish truth from error, least suspects that deep down in his mind there might be a wider ignorance which engulfs within its range both the truth and error which he recognizes in ordinary life. That is why Śaṅkara begins his Introduction to the Vedanta Sūtras with a concise and brisk statement of the nature of that error :—

(१) सत्यानृते मिथुनीकृत्य 'अहमिदम्' 'ममेदम्' इति नैसर्गिकोऽयं लोकव्यवहारः ॥

"It is a natural procedure on the part of man to base his conduct on the notions of me and mine, mixing up the real and the non-real."

Introduction to Sūtra Bhāshya, p. 1

And the set purpose of the Upanishads is to blot out this fundamental error :

(२) अस्यानर्थहेतोः प्रहाणाय, आत्मैकत्वविद्याप्रतिपत्तये सर्वे वेदान्ता आरभ्यन्ते ॥

"To destroy this basic cause of all evils, all the Vedantas (or Upanishads) are begun in order to teach the knowledge of the unity of Atman."

Intro. to SBh., p. 4.

38. This leads us to a consideration of the distinction of naive view of reality and truth and the Vedantic view of the same. Śaṅkara contrasts these two view-points by the terms *Loka-dṛshti*, and *Śāstra-dṛshti* respectively, as for instance in the following passage :

(१) 'उपसंहारदर्शनान्नेति चेन्न क्षीरवद्धि' (२-१-२४) इत्यत्र तु बाह्यनिमित्तनिरपेक्षमपि स्वाश्रयं कार्यं भवति – इत्येतत् लोकदृष्ट्या निदर्शितम् ; शास्त्रदृष्ट्या तु पुनः सर्वत्रैवेश्वरापेक्षत्वमापद्यमानं न पराणुद्यते ॥

"In the Sūtra 2-1-24, the illustration of the milk was adduced to show that there may be a change in the substance of a thing even without an external cause, and that was only from *Loka-dṛshti* (the commonsense view). But from *Śāstra-dṛshti* (the Vedantic view), however, which entails the uniform dependence of an effect upon the Lord is not discarded." SBh. 2-2-3, p 223.

Śaṅkara, however, uses another pair of names for these views, the *Vyāvahārika* (the practical) and the *Pāramārthika* (really real), as in the following statement :

(२) अभ्युपगम्य चेमं व्यावहारिकं भोक्तृभोग्यलक्षणं विभागं 'स्याल्लोकवत्' इति परिहारोऽभिहितः ; न त्वयं विभागः पारमार्थतोऽस्ति ॥

"The previous rejoinder citing the illustration of the sea and its waves, was given while granting this *Vyāvahārika* distinction (of practical life), of the experiencer and the experienced,

but from the *Pāramārthika* (really real) stand-point, however, there is no such distinction."

SBh. 2-1-14, p. 196.

We shall use these more familiar terms in our further discussion of these two stand-points.

39. The Saṁskrit word *Vyavahāra* comprehends not only thought and expression but also conduct based upon them. To think and talk of mother-of-pearl as silver, and proceed towards it with the intention of taking up the supposed silver, is *Mithyā-vyavahāra* (wrong behavior), while treating actual silver as silver in these three ways is *Samyag-vyavahāra* or right behaviour. Now the Vedantic view is that all our ideas, speech and conduct based upon practical life (व्यावहारिक), are really due to ignorance from the *Pāramārthika* (transcendental, really real) stand-point. So then *Vyāvahārika* view is the same as the view of ignorance (अविद्यकदृष्टि) or the view that distinguishes the knower and the known (प्रमाणप्रमेयदृष्टि), or the view of ordinary life (लोकदृष्टि), or the view based upon waking life (जाग्रद्दृष्टि). It is on the inborn tendency of the human mind to falsely superimpose the self and the not-self (the body, the senses and the mind of the waking state) upon each other that this *Vyāvahāric view* is based.

40. How is the waking point of view known to be the result of an error? We have already seen how this view takes the body and the organs of sense etc. to be real without any warrant, and mixes up the real Witnessing Atman and the unreal not-self. The following description of waking as *Laukika* rehearses the same idea at full length.

(१) सवस्तु संवृतिसता वस्तुना सह वर्तते इति सवस्तु । तथा च उपलब्धिः उपलम्भः । तेन सह वर्तत इति सोपलम्भं च । शास्त्रादि-सर्वव्यवहारास्पदं ग्राह्यग्राहकलक्षणं द्वयं लौकिकम् ; लोकादनपेतं लौकिकम् । जागरितम् इत्येतत् । एवंलक्षणं जागरितमिष्यते वेदान्तेषु ॥

"'With a thing' means that it contains objective things which are real from the stand-point of Avidyā. And 'with knowledge' means that it contains the knowledge of these things. That which is the field of all *Vyavahāra* including that of the Śāstra, the duality consisting of the knowing subject and the knowable objects, is called *Laukika*, the ordinary life, which is the same thing as the waking state. This is waking as described in the Vedantas." GKBh. 4-87, p. 252.

41. It may appear to be a bold statement to say that even the *Śāstraic Vyavahāra* has reality only in the field of Avidyā. Is it not self-stultifying to say that the unreal Śāstra reveals reality? And why should we shamelessly call perception and other means of knowledge unreal while we

have to deal with them all our life willynilly ? Śaṅkara replies :

(१) नैष दोषः । सर्वव्यवहाराणामेव प्राग् ब्रह्मात्मताविज्ञानात् सत्यत्वोपपत्तेः, स्वप्नव्यवहारस्येव प्राक्प्रबोधात् । यावद्धि न सत्यात्मैकत्वप्रतिपत्तिः, तावत् प्रमाणप्रमेयफललक्षणेषु विकारेषु अनृतत्वबुद्धिर्न कस्यचिदुत्पद्यते । विकारानेव तु अहं मम – इत्यविद्यया आत्मात्मीयेन भावेन सर्वो जन्तुः प्रतिपद्यते, स्वाभाविकीं ब्रह्मात्मतां हित्वा । तस्मात् प्राग्ब्रह्मात्मताप्रतिबोधात् उपपन्नः सर्वो लौकिको वैदिकश्च व्यवहारः । यथा सुप्तस्य प्राकृतस्य जनस्य स्वप्ने उच्चावचान् भावान् पश्यतो निश्चितमेव प्रत्यक्षाभिमतं विज्ञानं भवति प्राक् प्रबोधात्, न च प्रत्यक्षाभासाभिप्रायस्तत्काले भवति, तद्वत् ॥

" This fault cannot be imputed to our position; for all the *Vyavahāras* can be consistently real before enlightenment dawns, like the vyavahāra in a dream before waking. (To explain :–) So long as the knowledge of the one real Atman has not arisen, the idea of the unreality of the effects, that is, of the nature of the means of knowledge, objects of knowledge and the resultant knowledge never occurs to any one ; on the other hand every one takes the effects alone to be himself and his own and says ' this is me, this is mine', forgetting his own true nature of being Brahmātman. Therefore all Vyavahāra (procedure) secular and Vedic, is consistent so long as one is not awakened to the knowledge of one's being the Atman of Brahmic nature. This is just like the case of an ordinary person seeing all sorts of phenomena in a dream, He is sure that he actually perceives those things before he is awakened, and does not suspect they are only simulacra of perception. " SBh. 2-1-14, p. 198.

Add to this the conception of Śāstra as the ultimate means of knowledge as described in the previous section (p. 60) and we have a complete picture of Śaṅkara's distinction of the empirical view and the transcendental or Śāstraic view.

42. It would be interesting and profitable to contrast the significance of the several concepts we have discussed so far, from these two distinct points of view. To aid the memory of the beginner, the results of such a contrast are subjoined in a tabular form :—

| Concept | *Vyāvahāric Significance* | *Pāramārthic Significance* |
|---|---|---|
| *Atman* | The individual soul. | The witnessing principle. |
| *Avidyā* | Ignorance of a thing. | Superimposition of the self and the non-self. |
| *Vidyā* | Knowledge of an object. | Intuition of Brahman as the universal self. |
| *Sṛshti* | (1) Creating or inventing something. (2) the thing so created. | (1) Projection of an appearance. (2) The world superimposed on Brahman. |
| *Īśvara* | Ruler. | Atman exisisting independently of the world. |
| *Bondage* | Suspension, confinement. | Apparent limitation. |
| *Release* | Setting free, becoming free. | Getting rid of Avidyā etc. |

## 8. MATTER AND METHOD

43. Since according to Vedanta, Brahman is absolutely void of all distinctions, and that secondless entity is the only Reality, one might well wonder how there could be a Science of Reality, how there could be any teaching of Brahman, to whom that teaching could be addressed and what purpose the teaching could possibly serve. These four primary considerations, called *Anubandhas* in the realistic Darśanas cannot gain entrance in the Advaita which knows no distinctions or differences. How is then a science or philosophy of Advaita possible at all ?

44. This difficulty is obviated in Vedanta by adopting a method of teaching called the *Adhyāropāpavāda Nyāya*. This method consists in the device of deliberately superimposing something on Reality for the time being in order to remove some other superimposed characteristics and then to rescind the presumed characteristic as well. That this is the only method adopted in the Upanishads has been shown by Śaṅkara in his commentaries on the Upanishads and explained in so many words in his commentary on the Bhagavadgīta. Thus in the course of explaining the meaning of ślōkas (p. 13 and 14 of Ch. XIII),

which are by the way a virtual reproduction of *Svetāsvatara* ( III 16 and 17 ), he writes :-

(१) क्षेत्रोपाधिभेदकृतं विशेषजातं मिथ्यैव क्षेत्रज्ञस्य – इति तदपनयनेन ज्ञेयस्वमुक्तं 'न सत्तन्नासदुच्यते' इति । उपाधिकृतं मिथ्यारूपमपि अस्तित्वाधिगमाय ज्ञेयधर्मवत् परिकल्प्योच्यते 'सर्वतः पाणिपादम्' इत्यादि । तथा हि संप्रदायविदां वचनम् 'अध्यारोपापवादाभ्यां निष्प्रपञ्चं प्रपञ्च्यते' इति ॥

" The several special features noticed in the *Kshetrajña* ( the Self ) owing to the limiting conditions caused by the different forms of *Kshetra* ( the body etc.) being unreal, have been rescinded in the previous S'lōka, and kshetrajña has been taught to be realized as neither being nor non-being. But in this verse (13), even the unreal nature manifested through the limiting conditions, has been treated as though it were the property of the knowable Self just to bring its existence home, and hence the knowable Kshetrajña is spoken of as possessing hands and feet etc. everywhere. Accordingly there is the well-known saying of the knowers of tradition. 'That which is devoid of all details is set-forth in detail through deliberate superimposition and rescission. "

GBh. 13-13, p. 203, 204.

(२) उपाधिभूतपाणिपादादीन्द्रियाध्यारोपणात् ज्ञेयस्य तद्वत्ताशङ्का मा भूदित्येवमर्थं श्लोकारम्भः – ॥

" Lest it should be supposed that this knowable Atman is really possessed of the senses such as

hands and feet, just because they are imputed to it, this next verse is begun (to negate them)."

GBh. 13-14, p. 204.

45. We shall try to show here how this device of Adhyārōpāpavāda (ascription and subsequent negation) has been applied in the Upanishads in the case of each of the concepts we have discussed in the preceding pages :

१ (a) अणोरणीयान् महतो महीयानात्मा गुहायां निहितोऽस्य जन्तोः ॥

"Subtler than the subtlest, greater than the greatest, the Atman is hidden in the cave (of the heart) of this born being." Tai. Na. 10.

Here Atman is described as residing within the heart of the Jiva, who desires to know the truth about the Self. Hence this is an ascription of a place to the Atman who being omnipresent cannot be located. This is done with the intention of withdrawing an extrovert mind which is naturally attracted by external objects of sense.

(b) एको देवः सर्वभूतेषु गूढः सर्वव्यापी सर्वभूतान्तरात्मा ।
कर्माध्यक्षः सर्वभूताधिवासः साक्षी चेता केवलो निर्गुणश्च ॥

"The one Deva (God) is hidden in all beings. All-pervading, the one inmost Self of all creatures, presiding over all, the witnessing consciousness residing in all creatures, the One without a second, having no qualifying adjuncts." Sve. 6-11.

This predication of omnipresence to Atman as the Self of all, rescinds the ascription of its location in the heart of born creatures.

२ (a) अविद्यायामन्तरे वर्तमानाः स्वयं धीराः पण्डितंमन्यमानाः ।
दन्द्रम्यमाणाः परियन्ति मूढा अन्धेनैव नीयमाना यथाऽन्धाः ॥

"Living in the midst of Avidyā but priding in their discriminating power and learning, the perplexed fools whirl round and round in saṁsāra like blind men led by one who is oneself blind."

Ka. 2–5.

Here it is presumed that there are persons who do not know the real nature of the Brahman-Self. Of course it is on this supposition of the ignorance of Brahman-Atman, that the enquiry into the nature of Brahman is begun. It should be noted that the student of Vedanta is granted to be ignorant of his true Brahmic nature, and that Brahman is the object of enquiry. Both of these assumptions are quite necessary before the Śāstra or the teacher proposes to propound the real nature of Brahman. It is from this *Adhyāropa* (deliberate superimposition) stand-point that Śaṅkara writes in his commentary on the first Sūtra of Bādarāyaṇa :–

"एवं बहवो विप्रतिपन्ना युक्तिवाक्यतदाभासक्षमाश्रयाः सन्तः । तत्राविचार्य यत्किञ्चित् प्रतिपद्यमानो निःश्रेयसात् प्रतिहन्येत, अनर्थं च इयात् । तस्मात् ब्रह्मजिज्ञासोपन्यासमुखेन वेदान्तवाक्यमीमांसा तदविरोधितर्कोपकरणा निःश्रेयसप्रयोजना प्रस्तूयते ॥"

"Thus there are many thinkers who differ from one another on this subject, some of them depending upon sound arguments and genuine texts while others depend on those of seeming validity. One who would accept any one of these opinions at random without seriously pondering over the matter, would be not only prevented from attaining the highest good, but even run the risk of becoming a prey to evil consequences. Therefore through proposing the enquiry into Brahman, this sacred investigation of the meaning of Vedanta texts, with the ancillary reasoning unopposed to them, is begun with the aim of showing the way to the highest good." SBh. 1-1-1, p. 4.

Here evidently besides the ignorance of Brahman, the validity of the Śāstra as a means to Release, and the efficacy of sound reasoning subservient to it, as also duly qualified aspirants for the final goal, are all taken for granted to be factual from the Adhyārōpa-standpoint of view.

(b) पुरुष एवेदं विश्वं कर्म तपो ब्रह्म परामृतम् ।
एतद्यो वेद निहितं गुहायां सोऽविद्याग्रन्थिं विकिरतीह सोम्य ॥

"All this Universe consisting of religious works, knowledge and Brahman supremely immortal, is verily Purusha. One who knows this to be concealed in the recess of his heart, verily cuts this knot of Avidyā here and now, my dear boy."

Mu. 2-1-10.

Here there is the *adhyārōpa* of Vidya and its efficiency in completely destroying Avidyā. Now,

from the really real point of view, there is always only Brahman and nothing else. What is the correct view to take about these concepts of Vidyā and Avidyā ? The following excerpt from S'aṅkara will clarify this :-

(c) कस्य पुनरयमप्रबोध इति चेत्, यस्त्वं पृच्छसि तस्य ते – इति ब्रूमः । नन्वहम् ईश्वर एवोक्तः श्रुत्या । यद्येवं प्रतिबुद्धोऽसि नास्ति कस्यचिदप्रबोधः । योऽपि दोषश्चोद्यते कैश्चिदविद्यया किलाऽऽत्मनः सद्वितीयत्वात् अद्वैतानुपपत्तिरिति, सोऽप्येतेन प्रत्युक्तः ॥

*Objection :* But to whom does the *Aprabodha* (ignorance) pertain ?

*Reply :* We reply, To you who are asking this question.

*Objection :* But I am taught by the S'ruti to be Īs'vara himself !

*Reply :* If you are thus awake, then there is no Avidyā attaching itself to any one. And by this reply this additional fault laid at the door of the system by some objectors may also be regarded as having been set aside. They say that Atman having Avidyā as a second entity beside him, Advaita would cease to be a fact.

SBh. 4-1-3, p. 465.

Gauḍapāda has summed up this Apavāda (abrogation) of the assumption of Vidyā and Avidyā in the following verse :

अनादिमायया सुप्तो यदा जीवः प्रबुध्यते ।
अजमनिद्रमस्वप्नमद्वैतं बुध्यते तदा ॥

" When this Jīva awakes from his beginningless

illusory dream, he then realizes the unborn, sleepless, dreamless, secondless Self." GK. 1-16

[ Here 'sleep' is the name given to not-knowing, and 'dream' to wrong conception or Adhyāsa.]

46. Avidyā is the most fundamental concept used as a device for showing the illusory nature of all other concepts. It is to be itself overpassed when enlightenment dawns. We may now take up the other concepts to show how they serve as devices to teach the truth applying this self-same principle of *Adhyāropāpavāda.*

*Atman* is assumed to be an individual self in order to explode the delusion that the body, the senses or the mind may be the self. Thus proceeding from the body one rises to the consciousness of the true self by taking for granted that the inner and more subtle non-self is the actual self and rejecting the grosser non-self which was previously mistaken for the Self. Ordinarily man's idea is so vague and confounded that he takes any one of the physiological or psychic forces or organs as his own self for practical purposes. This process is thus described by Śaṅkara :

(१) अध्यासो नाम अतस्मिंस्तद्बुद्धिः – इत्यवोचाम । तद्यथा पुत्रभार्यादिषु विकलेषु सकलेषु वा अहमेव विकलः सकलो वा इति बाह्यधर्मान् आत्मन्यध्यस्यति । तथा देहधर्मान् स्थूलोऽहम्, कृशोऽहम्, गौरोऽहम्, तिष्ठामि, गच्छामि, लङ्घयामि च – इति । तथा

इन्द्रियधर्मान् मूकः, काणः, क्लीबः, बधिरः, अन्धोऽहम् – इति । तथा अन्तःकरणधर्मान् कामसङ्कल्पविचिकित्साऽध्यवसायादीन् । एवम् अहंप्रत्ययिनम् अशेषस्वप्रचारसाक्षिणि प्रत्यगात्मन्यध्यस्य तं च प्रत्यगात्मानं सर्वसाक्षिणं तद्विपर्ययेण अन्तःकरणादिष्वध्यस्यति ॥

" We have already stated that superimposition means mistaking one thing for another. To explain by citation of specific instances : A man superimposes properties of external persons such as those of his son, wife or others on himself and thinks that he himself has a maimed body or a sound and perfect body while they (the wife, son or others) are maimed or possess a sound and perfect body. Similarly attributes of the body are superimposed when he thinks 'I am stout, lean or frail'; 'I am standing, I am going, I am jumping '. He superimposes the properties of the senses on himself, when he thinks ' I am dumb, blind of one eye, deaf or impotent. So also he superimposes the properties of the internal organ (the mind) such as desire, will, doubt, certanity, etc. In the same way he superimposes the ego on the inner Atman who is the Witness of all its modifications and vice versa that inner Atman, the Witness of all, on the internal organ etc." Introduction to Sūtra Bhāshya.

Elsewhere, Śaṅkara writes :–

(२) यद्यपि च प्रतिपत्तव्य आत्मा निरंशः, तथापि चाध्यारोपितं तस्मिन् बह्वंशत्वम्, देहेन्द्रियमनोबुद्धिविषयवेदनादिलक्षणम् । तत्र एकेनावधानेन एकमंशमपोहति, अपरेणापरम् इति युज्यते तत्र क्रमवती प्रतिपत्तिः ॥

> "It is true that the self to be known is partless, but there are many parts superimposed on him, such as the body, the senses, imagination, intellect and feeling or the experience of objects of sense. Now by one specific concentration, he discards one such part as the not-self, and by another some other part. And so there is the possibility of gradual knowledge of the true self."
>
> SBh. 4-1-2, p. 462.

Thus by means of the assumption of particular pseudo-selves as the real Self, certain other such may be relegated to the class of not-selves, and the process might continue till at last one arrives at the genuine Atman, the one Self in all beings.

47. Similarly the world is taught to be a *creation* or transformation of the Supreme Atman in such S'rutis as (१) सोऽकामयत। बहु स्यां प्रजायेयेति। स तपोऽतप्यत। स तपस्तप्त्वा। इदं सर्वमसृजत। (Tai. 2-6. 'He desired that he might become plentious and be born as many, and created all this'); but in another place, the material of the universe may be declared to be Māyā मायां तु प्रकृतिं विद्यात् (S've. 4-10) thus denying real *causation* and elsewhere the whole Universe may be pronounced to be Brahman alone ब्रह्मैवेदं विश्वमिदं वरिष्ठम् ('All this indeed is verily Brahman itself' Mu. 2-2-11), while in a fourth place the whole manifestation of Brahman as with form and formless may be emphatically denied अथात आदेशो नेति नेति

न ह्येतस्मादिति नेत्यन्यत्परमस्ति ( Now for the teaching of the real Brahman, 'Not this, not that'; there is no other way of describing Brahman except by negation (Br. 2-3-6).

The different ways of creation, described by different illustrations are only a device to take the aspiring mind tothe realization of the real Atman. So says the Revered Gauḍapāda :—

मृल्लोहविस्फुलिङ्गाद्यैः सृष्टिर्या चोदितान्यथा ।
उपायः सोऽवताराय नास्ति भेदः कथञ्चन ॥

" By illustrations like those of clay, gold and sparks creation has been described in various ways by the Śrutis. All that is only a means to take the mind to Truth. There is no difference or distinction whatever in Brahman due to creation."

GK. 3-15.

48. We may now turn towards the concept of *Īśvara*. The word in Sanskrit literally means a ruler and hence it is only a relative term. Brahman is spoken of as Īśvara only when contrasted with the Jīvas from the empirical point of view. The apparent inconsistency of admitting the distinction of a God and the individual souls in the Absolutism of Vedanta, has been explained by Śaṅkara by postulating Māyic conditioning adjuncts (see para 16, p. 29) invariably by citing the illustration of the distinction of the Universal

Ether *(Ākāśa)* and ether conditioned by jars, pots etc. And the seeming anomaly in using one and the same epithet Īśvara and even (Para-Brahman) for both the Higher and Lower Brahmans, has been cleared up (p. 37) by drawing the attention of beginners to the fact that one and the same Reality is meant in all these cases ; only one has to keep in mind the context - whether of Jñāna (knowledge) or of Upāsanā (meditation) in which the term is used to avoid confusion.

49. Bearing this in mind, we may now proceed to see how the *Adhyāropāpavāda Nyāya* is applied to this concept of Īśvara. The following extract from Śaṅkara may be studied with profit in this connection :—

(१) तदेवम् अविद्यात्मकोपाधिपरिच्छेदापेक्षमेव ईश्वरस्येश्वरत्वं सर्वज्ञत्वं सर्वशक्तित्वं च न परमार्थतो विद्यया अपास्तसर्वोपाधिस्वरूपे आत्मनि ईशित्रीशितव्यसर्वज्ञत्वादिव्यवहार उपपद्यते ॥

" Thus the Īśvarahood of Īśvara, has omniscience, omnipotence etc. are all due to the limitation caused by the adjuncts set up by Avidyā, while from the Paramārtha stand-point there cannot be reasonably any thought of the distinction of the ruler and the ruled or omniscience etc. in the Atman whose essential nature is altogether free from all limiting adjuncts. "

SBh. 2-1-14, p. 201.

And S'aṅkara shows how even the S'ruti constantly makes use of concepts like Īs'vara from the stand-point of practical life :—

(२) व्यवहारावस्थायां तूक्तः श्रुतावपि ईश्वरादिव्यवहारः – 'एष सर्वेश्वर एष भूताधिपतिरेष भूतपाल एष सेतुर्विधरण एषां लोकानामसंभेदाय' (बृ. ४-४-२२) इति ॥

"In the state of practical life in the S'ruti also the convention of Īs'vara etc. has been enunciated : 'This is the Ruler of all, this is the one Lord of all beings, this is the protector of all beings, this is the dam that maintains the boundaries so that there may not be any intermixing of the duties of these men.' (Br. 4-4-22)."

SBh. 2-1-14, p. 201.

And the S'ruti elsewhere rescinds this assumption in the following words :—

एतज्ज्ञेयं नित्यमेवात्मसंस्थं नातः परं वेदितव्यं हि किञ्चित् ।
भोक्ता भोग्यं प्रेरितारं च मत्वा सर्वं प्रोक्तं त्रिविधं ब्रह्ममेतत् ॥

"This, which is eternally in one's own self has got to be known; for there is nothing else to be known beyond this. The experiencer, the object of experience and the Inspirer must be contemplated and known. All this, the threefold distinction mentioned here, is really Brahman." Sve. 1-12.

Here God who guides the individual soul, is declared to be no other than Brahman in the same way as the soul itself. The distinction between Īs'wara and the soul being based upon

limiting adjuncts projected by Avidyā, disappears simultaneously with the knowledge of their eternal unity. So says Śaṅkara in another context :

(३) अपि च यदा 'तत्त्वमसि' इत्येवंजातीयकेन अभेदनिर्देशेन अभेदः प्रतिबोधितो भवति, अपगतं भवति तदा जीवस्य संसारित्वं ब्रह्मणश्च स्रष्टृत्वम् । समस्तस्य मिथ्याज्ञानविजृम्भितस्य भेदव्यवहारस्य सम्यग्ज्ञानेन बाधितत्वात् ॥

" Moreover, when non-duality is revealed by texts of the type of ' That thou art ' by pointing out non-difference, then both Jīva's liability to experience mundane life and Brahman's creative aspect disappear, because all conventions of differences being the display of delusion, are then banished by right knowledge." SBh. 2-1-22, p. 209.

50. And now for the concept of *Bondage and Release.* The following Śruti refers to the Self in both these states :

(१) अनीशश्चाऽऽत्मा बध्यते भोक्तृभावात् ज्ञात्वा देवं मुच्यते सर्वपाशैः ॥

" The self, not being able to do anything of his own free-will, is bound because of its nature of being an experiencer of the fruits of action, but on knowing the Deva, the Self-shining Brahman, he is freed from all his bonds. " Śve. 1-8.

It is evident that the text implies that bondage is due to ignorance since knowledge of the

divine nature is declared to be the liberator. And how is *Bhoktṛtva* the cause of bondage? We learn from another Śruti :—

(२) आत्मेन्द्रियमनोयुक्तं भोक्तेत्याहुर्मनीषिणः ॥

"The wise ones call him *Bhōkta* (experiencer) who is conjoined to the body, the senses and the mind." Ka. 3-4.

And this so-called conjunction, we have seen (p. 49), is the result of ignorance. So then from this *Apavāda* (rescission) view release becomes synonimous with the knowledge of one's eternal nature as having no body. This point Śaṅkara makes clear in the following words :

(३) अशरीरत्वमेव धर्मैकार्यम् इति चेत्, न, तस्य स्वाभाविकत्वात् । 'अशरीरं शरीरेष्वनवस्थेष्ववस्थितम् । महान्तं विभुमात्मानं मत्वा धीरो न शोचति' (का· २-२२), इत्यादिश्रुतिभ्यः ॥

*Objection :* But this state of being freed from a body, is itself the effect of Vedic works !

*Reply :* No, it cannot be so. For that is one's eternal nature. For this, we have the authority of texts such as 'The wise one who knows the bodiless One in all the bodies, Himself remaining changeless in all the changeful (bodies), as the great omnipresent Atman, never grieves' (K. 2-22)."
SBh. 1-1-4, p. 14.

So then the idea of one's being bound by the body and obtaining release from that bondage

ultimately, resolves itself into being ignorant of the nature of Atman and dispelling that ignorance by means of right knowledge. And we have clearly seen that the teaching of ignorance and knowledge is also in its turn an instance of *Adhyāropāpavāda.*

Gauḍapāda who knows the spirit of Vedanta tradition, rightly remarks :

न निरोधो न चोत्पत्तिर्न बद्धो न च साधकः ।
न मुमुक्षुर्न वै मुक्त इत्येषा परमार्थता ॥

" No dissolution, no origin ; no one bound, no one really practicing the acts of discipline. Neither one who longs for release nor indeed one who is released. This is the true nature of things. "

GK. 2-32.

51. The next concept to which this principle of deliberate superimposition and rescission has been applied, may be now taken up. How is the conception of the validity of the Śāstra justifiable from the standpoint of Advaita ? Adopting the *Adhyāropa* point of view, the Śruti says :

(१) ' सर्वे वेदा यत्पदमामनन्ति '

" That Goal which all the Vedas teach. "

Ka. 2-15.

(२) नावेदविन्मनुते तं बृहन्तम् ।

" No one who is not proficient in the Vedas, can know that Great One." Tai. Brā. 3-12-9-7.

This is of course from the *Adhyāropa* point of view. From the *apavāda* point of view, however, they proclaim :

(३) अत्र पिताऽपिता भवति माताऽमाता लोका अलोका देवा अदेवा वेदा अवेदाः ॥

"Here the father becomes no father, the mother no mother, the worlds no worlds, the gods no gods, and the Vedas no Vedas." Br. 4-3-22.

[Where everything merges in the one Atman, even the Vedas are no longer Vedas.]

It is only in the field of Avidyā that the Vedas are conceded to be a valid source of knowledge. But when the goal is reached there is no need for this concession, for then all is seen to be the One Atman.

52. The concept of *Vyavahāra* (thought, expression and deed) is conceded only where we see duality, but there is no distinction whatever in the one Atman and hence the concession is retracted in the context of Reality :

(१) यत्र हि द्वैतमिव भवति तदितर इतरं पश्यति तदितर इतरं जिघ्रति तदितर इतरं रसयते तदितर इतरमभिवदति तदितर इतरं शृणोति तदितर इतरं मनुते तदितर इतरं स्पृशति तदितर इतरं विजानाति यत्र त्वस्य सर्वमात्मैवाभूत् तत्केन कं पश्येत्तत्केन कं जिघ्रेत्तत्केन कं रसयेत् तत्केन कमभिवदेत्तत्केन कं शृणुयात्तत्केन कं मन्वीत तत्केन कं स्पृशेत्तत्केन कं विजानीयात् ॥

> "Where it is as if it were duality, there one sees another, there one smells another, there one tastes another, one speaks to another, there one hears another, there one thinks of another, there one touches another, there one knows another. But where to this (enlightened one), all has become the one Atman, there who is to see whom, there who is to smell whom, there who is to taste whom, there who is to speak to whom, there who is to hear whom, there who is to think of whom, there who is to touch whom, and who is to know whom ?"
>
> Bṛ. 4-5-15.

The Śruti says that even while seeing another and carrying on other functions of the sensory organs, *it is duality as it were*, for in reality it is Atman all the while, and so the distinction of the ordinary view and the transcendental view is itself abrogated here.

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## 9. SANNYASA AND YOGA

53. We have so far dwelt upon Śaṅkara's clarification of the most important Vedantic concepts relating to the central teaching of the Upanishads regarding Reality. We have now to pass on to a consideration of two other concepts, *Sannyāsa* (renunciation) and *Yoga* (contemplation). These constitute the important steps of discipline which qualify an aspirant to enter upon the study of the cardinal doctrines of Vedanta.

54. The word *Sannyāsa* as popularly understood is associated with the mendicant life of a certain order of monks who wear ochre clothing. The significance of the Vedantic concept of Sannyāsa is so variously understood by commentators that it is necessary to examine it more closely in order to shed light upon its precise nature as taught in the Upanishads. Here are some texts from the *Mundaka* and the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* :

(१) तपःश्रद्धे ये ह्युपवसन्त्यरण्ये
शान्ता विद्वांसो भैक्षचर्यां चरन्तः ।
सूर्यद्वारेण ते विरजाः प्रयान्ति
यत्रामृतः स पुरुषो ह्यव्ययात्मा ॥

"As for those who devote themselves to *Tapas* and *Śraddha* (discipline proper to their station of

life, and meditation) in the forest with self-control and wisdom, and living on alms and unsullied by desire, they go through the solar-door to where the immortal Purusha of undecaying nature dwells." Mu. 1-2-11.

[The 'solar-door' represents the *devayāna-path* along which devoted souls travel to reach the *Brahma-Lōka*.]

This life is common to both *Vānaprasthas* and *Sannyāsins* who have renounced the house-holder's order as directed by the Smṛtis. This is quite different from the *Paramahaṁsa-Sannyāsa* enjoined in the Upanishad texts like the following :

(२) एतं वै तमात्मानं विदित्वा ब्राह्मणाः पुत्रैषणायाश्च वित्तैषणायाश्च लोकैषणायाश्च व्युत्थायाथ भिक्षाचर्यं चरन्ति ॥

"Knowing this Atman well-known to Vedantins, Brāhmaṇas transcend longing for offspring, longing for wealth and longing for the (three) worlds, and live on alms." Bṛ. 3-5-I.

The Bhāshya on this text remarks :-

(३) विज्ञानसमानकर्तृकात् पारिव्राज्यात् एषणाव्युत्थानलक्षणात् पारिव्राज्यान्तरोपपत्तेः । यद् हि तदेषणाभ्यो व्युत्थानलक्षणं पारिव्राज्यम्, तदात्मज्ञानाङ्गम्, आत्मज्ञानविरोध्येषणापरित्यागरूपत्वात् । अविद्याविषयत्वाच्चैषणायाः । तद्व्यतिरेकेण चास्ति आश्रमरूपं पारिव्राज्यं ब्रह्मलोकादिफलप्राप्तिसाधनम्, यद्विषयं यज्ञोपवीतादिसाधनविधानं लिङ्गविधानं च ॥

"For there may be reasonably a *pārivrājya* (going away from home, Sannyāsa), other than

that which belongs to the knowing person, and is of the nature of transcending all desires. To explain: That *pārivrājya*, which is of the nature of transcending the desires (*eshaṇās*), is ancillary to the knowledge of Atman, for it is of the nature of renunciation of the desire opposed to the knowledge of Brahman, and desire is only in the sphere of *Avidyā*. And other than that there is a *pārivrājya* in the form of an *Āsrama* (order of life), a means to the attainment of the *Brahmalōka* and other fruits of action. It is in connection with this sannyāsa that wearing *Yajñōpavīta* etc. are enjoined and that the *Linga* (the characteristic uniform of the order) is enjoined. Br. Bh. 3-5-1, p. 815.

[The sacred thread or wearing the cloth in a particular form is necessary for worshipping the gods, or the manner of carrying on human activities in accordance with religion. This *Yajñōpavītādi*, wearing a saffron cloth, carrying a staff, a water-pot, and other items distinguishing a Sannyāsin is *linga*.]

This description of a Smārtha Sannyāsin, must be sufficient to assure us that a real *Paramahaṁsa* has no characteristic marks of a particular *Āsrama*. Accordingly the *Jābālōpanishad* says:

(४) अथ परिव्राड् विवर्णवासा मुण्डोऽपरिग्रहः शुचिरद्रोही भैक्षमाणो ब्रह्मभूयाय भवतीति ॥

"And now for the *Parivrāt*, wearing a slightly coloured cloth, shaven, having nothing in his possession, clean, malevolent towards none, living on alone, he attains Brahman-hood." Jāb. 5.

55. So much for the outward form of a Sannyāsin. And what would be the nature of his mind ? Here is what Lord Sri Krishna says :-

(१) असक्तबुद्धिः सर्वत्र जितात्मा विगतस्पृहः ।
नैष्कर्म्यसिद्धिं परमां संन्यासेनाधिगच्छति ॥

" Possessing a mind unattached to everything, self-controlled, void of all desires, he attains the accomplishment of perfect actionlessness, through *Sannyāsa.*" G. 18-49.

Here Śaṅkara's commentary explains that Sannyāsa is either right knowledge, or the renunciation of all actions through that knowledge (सम्यग्दर्शनेन तत्पूर्वकेण वा सर्वकर्मसंन्यासेन ). And what this internal renunciation of all actions consists in, is thus explained by the Lord himself :-

(२) सर्वकर्माणि मनसा संन्यस्यास्ते सुखं वशी ।
नवद्वारे पुरे देही नैव कुर्वन्न कारयन् ॥

" Having mentally renounced all actions, the self-controlled embodied one rests happy in the fortress of nine doors, himself doing nothing and engaging no one else in any action. " G. 5-13.

(३) नैव किञ्चित् करोमीति युक्तो मन्येत तत्त्ववित् ।
पश्यञ्शृण्वन् स्पृशन् जिघ्रन्नश्नन् गच्छन् स्वपन् श्वसन् ॥
प्रलपन् विसृजन् गृह्णन्नुन्मिषन्निमिषन्नपि ।
इन्द्रियाणीन्द्रियार्थेषु वर्तन्त इति धारयन् ॥

" The knower of truth would think that he is doing nothing while he sees, hears, touches,

smells, eats, moves about, sleeps, breathes, speaks, excretes (waste matter), grasps, opens or shuts his eyes ; he would always bear in mind that only the senses function on their objects." G. 5-8, 9.

This is the real *Sannyāsa* (renunciation), through *Samyagjñāna* (right knowledge). The right knowledge itself, as we have seen, has been (in Śaṅkara's commentary on Gītā 18-49) considered *Sannyāsa par excellence*. And what that right knowledge consists in in relation to action, is summed up in the following verse of the *Bhagavadgītā* :

(४) कर्मण्यकर्म यः पश्येदकर्मणि च कर्म यः ।
स बुद्धिमान् मनुष्येषु स युक्तः कृत्स्नकर्मकृत् ॥ १८ ॥

" He who sees inaction in action, and action in inaction, he is the wisest of all men ; he has a poised mind, and he alone has done all that had to be done. " G. 4-18.

Here Śaṅkara explains :

कर्तृतन्त्रत्वात् प्रवृत्तिनिवृत्त्योः । वस्त्वप्राप्त्यैव हि सर्व एव क्रियाकारकादिव्यवहारोऽविद्याभूमावेव ॥

" The wise one sees action in inaction, and inaction in action, seeing that all thought of action, means of action etc., are in the field of Avidyā alone since engagement in action or desisting from it both depend on the doing agent, and never affect the Reality of Atman." GBh. 4-18, p. 67.

56. Genuine *Sannyāsa* then consists in one's realizing the eternally actionless Atman as identical with one's own self. The effect of such realization on one's empirical life is obvious. The normal mind which recognizes gradations of fellow-beings as regards their physique, wealth, intellect and social position, naturally finds it difficult to adjust itself to the varying factors or to react with equanimity in all cases. But the genuine Sannyāsin, by dint of the mental equilibrium gained through his intuition and the Sannyāsin who tries to emulate him in his accomplishments for the sake of acquisition of right knowledge (विविदिषुः) on the other hand, is unique in his equable behaviour towards all. I shall quote a few more verses from the Bhagavadgītā in illustration of this :

(१) प्रजहाति यदा कामान् सर्वान् पार्थ मनोगतान् ।
आत्मन्येवात्मना तुष्टः स्थितप्रज्ञस्तदोच्यते ॥

" One is said to be a *Sthitaprajña* (equanimous) when one abandons all desires that pertain to the mind, being perfectly satisfied in and for one's own Self." G. 2-55.

[ The perfect one is never elated or dejected by pleasure or pain due to sensory contact of external objects, for he ever rests in his Real Self.]

(२) विद्याविनयसंपन्ने ब्राह्मणे गवि हस्तिनि ।
शुनि चैव श्वपाके च पण्डिताः समदर्शिनः ॥

इहैव तैर्जितः सर्गो येषां साम्ये स्थितं मनः ।
निर्दोषं हि समं ब्रह्म तस्माद्ब्रह्मणि ते स्थिताः ॥

"The wise look upon a learned Brāhmaṇa of reputed demeanour, a cow, an elephant, a dog or an outcaste with equal regard. They have indeed overcome birth in this very life, whose mind is fixed upon the one and the same Brahman in all. Brahman in all is, as is well-known, perfectly stainless and so they rest in Brahman alone."

G. 5–18, 19.

[ The wise stay their mind on Brahman only everywhere and are for ever unaffected by the external conditioning adjuncts superimposed by Avidyā.]

57. The real aim of Sannyāsa being the realization of the immortal Self of all, it is evident that acquisition of worldly possessions can be but a serious obstacle in the way of the aspirant for that Supreme Goal. The Śruti says :

'न कर्मणा न प्रजया धनेन त्यागेनैके अमृतत्वमानशुः ॥'

"Not by religious works nor by progeny, nor yet by acquisition of wealth, but only through renunciation did the great ones attain immortality."

Tai. N. 12–3.

It is strange and regrettable that this ideal of Sannyāsa taught by the Great Śaṅkarāchārya both by precept and example, has been almost lost sight of in these days, and even upstarts putting

on the ochre cloth and parading with staff and *Kamaṇḍulu* (water-pot) through busy streets or haranguing from platforms to eager crowds on the verities of Vedanta, are often admired as the harbingers of a new Vedantic age. One cannot guess what other ulterior motives may be looking behind the scene !

Those that are sincere aspirants for genuine *Sannyāsa*, however, will refuse to be admitted into this cadre of charlatans and escapists. For such candidates there are secondary types of *Sannyāsa* recommended in the *Śrutis* and *Smṛtis :*

(1) The first *Tyāga* or Sannyāsa is giving up prohibited immoral acts (निषिद्धत्याग) :-

' नाविरतो दुश्चरितात् '

" One who has not abstained from bad conduct, cannot attain Atman through knowledge. "

Ka. 2-24.

Then (2) renouncing the karmas enjoined for the various fruits thereof (काम्यकर्मत्याग), and then (3) giving up the desire for the enjoyment of fruits of all acts whatever :-

काम्यानां कर्मणां न्यासं संन्यासं कवयो विदुः ।
सर्वकर्मफलत्यागं प्राहुस्त्यागं विचक्षणाः ॥

" The far-seeing regard the renunciation of *Kāmya-karmas* as *Sannyāsa* and the wise call that *Tyāga* which consists in the abandonment of the fruits of all actions. " G. 18-2.

(4) The fourth step in the ladder is to perform one's own proper karma – the duty enjoined by the S'āstra as proper to his station in life :–

यतः प्रवृत्तिर्भूतानां येन सर्वमिदं ततम् ।
स्वकर्मणा तमभ्यर्च्य सिद्धिं विन्दति मानवः ॥

"By worshipping that God from whom all creatures are born and in whom all beings live and move, and by whom all this Universe is pervaded, by worshipping that God through the performance of one's own duty, man attains perfection."

G. 18–46.

When one has taken these successive steps, the final step can be scaled without difficulty. It is this final step that enables one to realize the goal at last.

(5) सर्वधर्मान् परित्यज्य मामेकं शरणं व्रज ।
अहं त्वा सर्वपापेभ्यो मोक्षयिष्यामि मा शुचः ॥

"Giving up all actions, take refuge in me alone. I shall free thee from all stains; do not grieve."

G. 18–66.

58. The Vedantic *concept of Yōga*, has been mistaken for so many practices advocated by different schools, that many gullible people are taken in by the display of certain miracles by unscrupulous imitators who would have us believe that their 'Yōga' is a free pass entitling them

to be considered as the only Vedantins. The doctrine of the Post-Śaṅkaras, stating that experience of Advaita is possible only in *Samādhi*, has added strength to this current belief. *Vāchaspati Miśra*, for instance, says :

(१) समाधिरिति संयमम् उपलक्षयति । धारणाध्यानसमाधयो हि संयमपदवेदनीयाः । यथाहुः 'त्रयमेकत्र संयमः' इति । अत्र 'श्रोतव्यो मन्तव्यः' इति धारणोपदेशः ; 'निदिध्यासितव्यः' इति ध्यानोपदेशः ; 'द्रष्टव्यः' इति समाधेरुपदेशः । यथाहुः – 'तदेव ध्यानम् अर्थमात्रनिर्भासं स्वरूपशून्यमिव समाधिः' इति । सोऽयमिह कर्त्रात्मा समाधौ उपदिश्यमानः, आत्मनः कर्तृत्वम् आवहतीति सूत्रार्थः ॥

This is Miśra's comment on Bādarāyaṇa's Vedanta Sūtra 2–3–39. Here evidently the author of the sub-commentary on Śaṅkara's Sūtra-Bhāshya is seeking to interpret the Vedantic text 'आत्मा वा अरे द्रष्टव्यः श्रोतव्यो मन्तव्यो निदिध्यासितव्यः' (Bṛ. 2–4–5) wherein Yājñavalkya is explaining to his wife how Atman is to be seen, i.e. realized. Of course, Atman being one's own self can never be literally 'seen'. The whole dialogue between the sage and his wife is devoted to show how the universe originates from Atman, rests in Atman while it appears and finally dissolves into Atman, and is therefore essentially identical with Atman. There is absolutely no reference to Yōga at all anywhere in this context and yet the author of

the *Bhāmati* is anxious to interpret this text as though it were a passage from Patanjali, and concludes by explaining that द्रष्टव्यः (Atman is to be seen) by means of experience in *Samādhi* (mystic trance) !

59. And the author of *Vivaraṇa* (commentator of the *Panchapādikā*) writes :

(२) ननु ब्रह्मात्मानुभवद्वैतदर्शनयोः कुतः साहित्यमुच्यते ? न वयं साहित्यं ब्रूमः । कदाचित् असंप्रज्ञातात्मैकत्वदर्शनम्, कदाचित् आरब्धकर्मोपस्थापितदोषनिमित्तद्वैतदर्शनं चेति ॥ PV. p. 284.

In this passage Prakāśātman is offering an explanation for the apparent inconsistency that one who has already intuited the non-dual Atman still continues to perceive the manifold world. His explanation is that the intuition is in the Yōgic trance of *Asamprajñāta-Samādhi* while the perception of duality is due to the defect engendered by the *Prārabdha-karma* (karma whose effects are still fructifying and can subside only after the mortal coil is shuffled off).

60. Other writers on Vedanta upto our own times also follow in the foot-steps of these way-showers and seem to think that experience of Vedantic truths is reserved for adepts in Pātanjala-Yōga. It is therefore meet that we examine what the Śrutis themselves have to say

on the subject and how Śaṅkara himself has clarified this concept.

61. We shall first advert to the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* text which the author of the Bhāmati feels to be redolent of *Yoga-Samādhi*. I have drawn the attention of the reader to the fact that in the entire body of the dialogue, Yōga is conspicuous by its absence. As for the word '*nididhyāsitavyah*' where Vāchaspati Miśra smells the *Yogic Dhyāna*, it reveals itself to be perfectly innocent of this denotation or connotation, when the sentence is examined as a whole. For it runs thus :

(३) आत्मा वा अरे द्रष्टव्यः श्रोतव्यो मन्तव्यो निदिध्यासितव्यो मैत्रेय्यात्मनो वा अरे दर्शनेन श्रवणेन मत्या विज्ञानेनेदं सर्वं विदितम् ॥

"Atman alone, O Maitreyi, is to be seen, to be heard, thought over and dwelt upon ; by seeing, thinking over and understanding of Atman, O my dear, all this becomes known." Br. 2-4-5.

Here it will be observed that the original word निदिध्यासन ('nididhyāsana') has been subsequently paraphrased by विज्ञान ('Vijñāna') which means to understand and know. That this is the significance to be attached to this term is confirmed by a previous sentence in this connection :

(४) स होवाच याज्ञवल्क्यः प्रिया बतारे नः सती प्रियं भाषसे एह्यास्स्व व्याख्यास्यामि ते व्याचक्षाणस्य तु मे निदिध्यासस्वेति ॥

" And that Yājñavalkya said : ' O how dear is my wife ! your talk is most pleasing to me, come on and take your seat and I will explain it to you. Listen and understand while I expatiate on the subject." Br. 2-4-4

Here it will be observed that the very word *Nididhyāsana* is employed to denote attentive listening and understanding the drift of what is spoken.

62. We may now take up Vedic passages which refer to Yōga expressly. The Upanishad that arrests our foremost attention in this connection is the Śvētāśvatara wherein we read :

(१) तत् कारणं साङ्ख्ययोगाधिगम्यं[1] ज्ञात्वा देवं मुच्यते सर्वपाशैः ॥

" That cause known through *Sāṁkhya and Yōga*, knowing that Deva, one is liberated from all bonds." Śve. 6-13.

Here Saṁkhya and Yōga are expressly declared to be the means of release.

(२) त्रिरुन्नतं स्थाप्य समं शरीरं हृदीन्द्रियाणि मनसा संनियम्य ।
ब्रह्मोडुपेन प्रतरेत विद्वान् स्रोतांसि सर्वाणि भयावहानि ॥
प्राणान् प्रपीड्येह स युक्तचेष्टः क्षीणे प्राणे नासिकयोच्छ्वसीत ।
दुष्टाश्वयुक्तमिव वाहमेनं विद्वान् मनो धारयेताप्रमत्तः ॥
समे शुचौ शर्कराबह्निवालुकाविवर्जिते शब्दजलाश्रयादिभिः ।
मनोनुकूले न तु चक्षुपीडने गुहानिवाताश्रयणे प्रयोजयेत् ॥

1. Śaṁkara's reading is '*Sāṁkhyayōgābhipannam*'.

The second and the third of these mantras (Sve. 2-8, 9, 10) refer to *Prāṇāyāma* (control of breath) and *Āsana* (posture) respectively. These practices are very much the same as those laid down by *Patanjali*. But that the result aimed at is quite different here is clear from the first verse which says :

> "After keeping the body erect and straight, and restraining the senses and detaining them by means of the mind in the heart, the wise one should cross all the dangerous currents by means of the boat of Brahman." Śve. 2-8.

It is obvious that it is not the mere suppression of the modifications of the mind that is aimed at; nor are the means confined to the usual eight steps of Yōga, for Brahman is the chief means here.

63. Śaṅkara expressly warns us that it is not the Sāṁkhya or the Yōga recommended in the schools named by these words that are meant in the text cited above :

> (३) यत्तु दर्शनमुक्तम् ' तत्कारणं साङ्ख्ययोगाभिपन्नम् ' इति, वैदिकमेव तत्र ज्ञानं ध्यानं च साङ्ख्ययोगशब्दाभ्याम् अभिलप्यते प्रत्यासत्तेः - इत्यवगन्तव्यम् ॥

> "As for the realization referred to in the text 'That cause attained through *Sāṁkhya* and *Yōga*, it must be concluded that it is the Vedic knowledge (of Atman) and the Vedic meditation that are

denoted by the words Sāṁkhya and Yōga, since that alone would be a mere direct reference in the context." SBh. 2-1-3, p. 183.

64. And now let us see if any other Upanishad refers to this 'Vedic' Yōga. We find the following texts in the *Katha :*

(१) मृत्युप्रोक्तां नचिकेतोऽथ लब्ध्वा
विद्यामेतां योगविधिं च कृत्स्नम् ।
ब्रह्म प्राप्तो विरजोऽभूद्विमृत्यु-
रन्योऽप्येवं यो विदध्यात्ममेव ॥

" Nachiketas got this knowledge as well as the way of Yōga as taught by Mṛtyu, (the God of death), attained Brahman and became free from all the taint of actions and from death. And so would he also become whoever knows this Adhyātmic truth. " Ka. 6-18.

[ Here is a reference to Yōga as a means to the knowledge of Brahman.]

(२) अध्यात्मयोगाधिगमेन देवं मत्वा धीरो हर्षशोकौ जहाति ॥

" The wise one who knows that Deva through the attainment of the Adhyātma Yōga gets rid of elation and grief. " Ka. 2-12.

Here the Yōga is specifically named *Adhyātma Yoga* (the Yōga of Atman), implying that the Yōga is intended for those who would realize the Atman taught in Vedanta. And the details of this Yōga are to be found in the following verses of the *Katha Upanishad :*

(३) एष सर्वेषु भूतेषु गूढोऽऽत्मा न प्रकाशते ।
दृश्यते त्वग्र्यया बुद्धया सूक्ष्मया सूक्ष्मदर्शिभिः ॥
यच्छेद् वाङ्मनसी प्राज्ञस्तद्यच्छेज्ज्ञान आत्मनि ।
ज्ञानमात्मनि महति नियच्छेत्तद्यच्छेच्छान्त आत्मनि ॥

का. ३-१२, १३.

"This Atman is hidden in all beings, and therefore does not show himself. But with the help of the keen concentrated subtle mind, He can be seen by those who persist in the practice of observing the subtle entity." Ka. 3-12.

For those that are extroverts, who identify themselves with the senses, this Atman is hidden, covered up with the Māya projected by Avidyā. For the introverts, however, who habitually look within, and concentrate the mind, He reveals himself without difficulty. This process of looking within and concentrating the mind is detailed in the next verse :

"The descriminating aspirant should merge speech and other organs in the mind, and that mind in the intellect. This intellect should be dissolved in the individual self (or Hiraṇyagarbha's intellect) and that again in the S'ānta-Atman, the real Atman free from all specific features."

Ka. 3-13

The senses, the common mind, the intellect, the individual self, are successively to be merged, the grosser in the more subtle, till at last everything else is seen to be one with the Real Self,

hidden in all beings. When all these apparent selves are realized to be merely appearances, and are finally dissolved into the Reality which is the substrate of all, that would be seen to be the aim of the whole process.

65. It will be noted that this Yōga, elsewhere described in the Upanishad as firm holding of the senses (स्थिरामिन्द्रियधारणाम् 6–11), is no creative imagination like *Upāsanā* (meditation). It is an effort to see subtle things as they are as for instance the concentrated effort on the part of a scientist when he observes minute things through a microscope. On turning inwards and closely examining, the senses are seen to be no more than functions of the mind (मनस्) and that the mind is nothing but the intellect (बुद्धि) the determining aspect of the mind. The thoughts of a thinker are then discerned to be the thinker himself. This thinker again is really the Universal Atman who is the changeless witnessing principle in each one of us.

66. This Adhyātma Yōga has been designated as *Dhyāna Yoga* in the Bhagavadgītā. It would be profitable to quote the relevant ślōkas here :

शनैः शनैरुपरमेद् बुद्धया धृतिगृहीतया ।
आत्मसंस्थं मनः कृत्वा न किञ्चिदपि चिन्तयेत् ॥
यतो यतो निश्चरति मनश्चञ्चलमस्थिरम् ।
ततस्ततो नियम्यैतदात्मन्येव वशं नयेत् ॥

प्रशान्तमनसं ह्येनं योगिनं सुखमुत्तमम् ।
उपैति शान्तरजसं ब्रह्मभूतमकल्मषम् ॥
युञ्जन्नेवं सदात्मानं योगी विगतकल्मषः ।
सुखेन ब्रह्मसंस्पर्शमत्यन्तं सुखमश्नुते ॥ G. 6–25 to 28.

The same process of merging the senses in the mind, and the mind (in all its aspects) in Atman is summarized here. The Yōgin is said to wash off all dross of foreign thought and contact Brahman (ब्रह्मसंस्पर्शम्) without any difficulty by dint of constant practice. And the ultimate result of this concentrated Yōga, is the realization of the Atman described in the Upanishads :

सर्वभूतस्थमात्मानं सर्वभूतानि चात्मनि ।
ईक्षते योगयुक्तात्मा सर्वत्र समदर्शनः ॥

"One who has attained the balanced mind through Yōga, sees the Atman in all beings and all beings in the Atman, for he sees the same Reality everywhere." G. 6–29.

सुहृन्मित्रार्युदासीनमध्यस्थद्वेष्यबन्धुषु ।
साधुष्वपि च पापेषु समबुद्धिर्विशिष्यते ॥

"One who treats a well-wisher, a friend, an enemy, a neutral person, a mutual friend, a hateful person, or a relative, a saint or a sinner with the same regard is really the best of Yōgins." G. 6-9.

[This is the best test in empirical life through which one can satisfy oneself as to whether or not he has been a perfect Yōgārūḍha.]

## CONCLUSION

67. We have now exhausted almost all the fundamental concepts according to Śaṅkara. The two most primary concepts of all are the concept of Atman and that of Avidyā. The discussion of the concept of Atman, starts from the generic idea of the empirical self, and ultimately leads the critical enquirer to the axiomatic notion of the Paramātman or Mahān Atman who is the Universal Witnessing Consciousness or Brahman, as is evidenced by the *Jyotirbrāhmaṇa* of the Bṛhadāraṇyaka which expatiates on the subject in the form of a narration of the dialogue between Janaka and Yāgñavalkya.

The sage Yāgñvalkya initiates the king into the mystery of the concept of Atman by saying that even when all the external lights are extinguished, it is the light of Atman alone that continues to serve as the guide for all human procedure in life. The first set of question and answer there, is as follows :—

(१) कतम आत्मेति योऽयं विज्ञानमयः प्राणेषु हृद्यन्तर्ज्योतिः पुरुषः स समानः सन्नुभौ लोकावनुसञ्चरति ध्यायतीव लेलायतीव स हि स्वप्नो भूत्वेमं लोकमतिक्रामति मृत्यो रूपाणि ॥

" *Question :* Which is that Atman ?

*Answer :* He who is of the nature of consciousness among the *Prāṇas* (or the organs of sense) and

is the light within the heart. Identifying himself with the mind, he traverses both the regions. He thinks as it were, and moves about as it were. Becoming indeed a dreamer, he crosses beyond this region and transcends the forms of death."

Br. 4-3-7, p. 867.

Here is a clue to the fact that Atman does not really own the aggregate of the body and the senses which make him mortal; for he transcends this mortal coil so soon as he enters the dream-land. After subsequently showing how every soul that goes into the state of deep sleep, crosses beyond ignorance, desire and action and extricating itself from the toils and moils of mundane life it is beyond all desire and grief (आप्तकाममात्मकाममकामं शोकान्तरम् बृ. ४-७-२१) even through this temporary merging in Brahman (4-3-32)- and after narrating the vicissitudes of the transmigratory soul, the sage finally concludes :—

(२) स वा एष महानज आत्माऽजरोऽमरोऽमृतोऽभयो ब्रह्माऽभयं वै ब्रह्माभयं हि वै ब्रह्म भवति य एवं वेद ॥ (४-४-२५)

"This great unborn Atman indeed is unaging, undying, immortal Brahman. Brahman, as is well-known, is fearless. Verily whoso knows it thus, becomes the fearless Brahman indeed."

Br. 4-4-25, p. 938.

The other concept, to wit, that of Avidyā, is unlike the concept of Atman, only a concession to

the naive mind which longs to attain final release. Avidya according to Śaṅkara is, as we have already seen, the instinctive notion of me and mine entertained by all human beings owing to the mutual superimposition of the Self and the non-self. Nobody suspects it to be ignorance till the Śāstra and a Vedantic teacher disclose its delusive nature. The concept is a device employed by the Upanishads for the purpose of teaching the truth. All other concepts such as causation, creation, Īśvara, spiritual discipline including Sannyāsa and Yōga and the validity of the Śruti itself as a means of right knowledge as well as the distinction between the empirical and the transcendental views, all these presuppose the concept of Avidyā. There can be no talk of the science of Vedanta, or of the relation of a master and the pupil aspiring for a course of instruction in that science without the concept of Avidyā as the prius. The moment one rises to the mental level of Vidyā which discloses the true nature of Brahman as the only reality, all these concepts are invalidated and the intuition of the non-dual Brahman alone remains as the eternal Truth and Reality in one.

*Om Tat Sat*

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